

Lutheran World Federation

DECEMBER 2000

Youth

magazine

Youth Redefining Hope

46

Department for
Mission and Development

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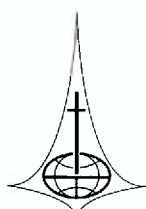
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Editorial

Dear friends,

The coming of the new year always brings hope and promise. As I remember the beginning of the Year 2000, I could say that it was quite a meaningful one for me which really started with a lot of promise and hope. First, I celebrated the welcoming of the new century with my family in my home country, the Philippines, which was my first visit after six consecutive years of absence. Second, I started my new call to serve in the Lutheran World Federation – Department for Mission and Development's Youth in Church and Society desk. It is quite an honor and a challenge to "walk" with the youth towards the 3rd millennium. So far, a future filled with hope has carried me through the last eleven months and writing this editorial encourages me to hold on to this hope for and with the youth. But how do we proceed amidst the reality of a dimming hope? Has the hope of the new millennium gone?

At the height of this anticipation, HOPE has become a favored if not a priceless possession. Everyone is expected to have hope. Slogans and statements, both from secular and religious groups and communities, have described this hope in many ways: high hopes, great hopes, visible hope, just to name a few. Some contemporary writers even call it 'reckless hope' or 'generating hope.' Often in order to experience immediate gratification, hope is entrusted to the 21st century's culture of technology, a culture of scientific and medical discoveries for prolonging one's life and/or retaining one's vitality, "wider is better" cars, and so forth. This kind of hope is measured by tangible things and is bound by time. This hope was reflected as I watched the excitement of the people at extravagant and very expensive celebrations of the millennium from various countries which were globally televised. Such displays projected a lot of optimism for the future but at the same time raised social, ethical and spiritual issues.

The latter represents another side of hope. Hope can be little or pessimistic. One can lose hope. One can have false hope. One can even hope against hope when one hopes without any basis for expecting fulfillment. For some, this is what is known as hope with empty words and promises. So what do youth hope for in this time of great expectation on the one hand and uncertainty on the other? Where is this hope anchored? For youth, what does it mean to anticipate the future with hope?

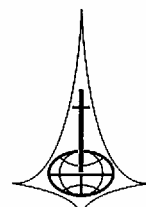


This issue, closely related to the last issue entitled, "Special Feature: Youth 2000," contains stories from youth events in celebration of the millennium. They are stories told by youth who voice their active commitment towards full participation in the life of the church and society. Included are articles of hope which do not wait idle as "hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12) but rather testify to hope in action. These stories of hope are not based on people's limitation but instead find its source from a gift; a Living Hope through God's calling to the young people to harness visions. This hope from is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19) for the youth.

The stories you will uncover on the following pages are ones redefining hope – a hope that defies time and spatial boundaries set by the world. Even though the events that prompted these stories only happened in a specific time and in a specific place, the words offer hope for a better life wherever and whoever you are. Youth today are acting in ways that defies division. We are holding steadfast to the hope for unity and reconciliation. Youth are telling their stories of identity with courage that sometimes reveal pain but also a hope for healing.

I am honored to bring to you the transforming hope of our youth today that will move each one of us to solidarity, both in words and action.

*Peace,
Lita Valeriano*



Turning Our Church Inside-Out

Linda Macqueen is the editor of the Lutheran Church of Australia's magazine, 'The Lutheran'. She has been involved in youth ministry for much of her adult life, working in volunteer and full-time positions in congregational and regional contexts. For six years, she held the position of youth ministry consultant in the state of Queensland, Australia.

Our youth don't want to be entertained by the church; nor will they be 'retained' by any program or activity we devise. They want to be the church, not within its traditional four walls, but where Christ calls them to be—out there.

Turning Point 2000 was an International Lutheran Youth Evangelism Conference, which took place in Sidney, Australia. More than 200 people attended this event. The conference was held from 24 to 30 January 2000 at the picturesque Merroo Conference Centre.

Watching a group of young people praying for our church gives one a quiet confidence that the future of the LCA is not as bleak as it could be. After that it gets scary.

It gets scary because these young people are not just praying about the problems of our church; they are doing something about it. And what they are doing is going to push a lot of us beyond our comfort zones. These young people are no longer waiting for adults to take the lead in evangelism. In some cases, sadly, they have grown tired of waiting. They don't need to analyse the statistics to know our church is in decline.

They can readily see that their friends don't come to church. And they know it's time to stop expecting them to. It's time instead to take the church to them.

These young people don't have a lot of time for committees and task forces that discuss evangelistic strategies. They are just doing it. Watching them is scary, unsettling for those who like to think that if we just wait long enough, pray enough, build better worship centres, change the style of music and the colour of the carpet, the masses will come flooding back to church. They won't. And these young people know it. This new breed of Lutheran youth will move our church beyond its four walls and into the schools and sports fields where their unchurched friends hang out. They are going to turn our church inside-out. What they saw and heard at Turning Point 2000 will help them do it.

Around two hundred youth leaders from Australia and New Zealand attended Turning Point, which was held at the Merroo Conference Centre in the foothills of the Blue Mountains, NSW. Turning Point was solid going, with a packed six-day program incorporating leading speakers from Australia and America, and a selection of thirty-something electives. This was not a 'how to' gathering. Nobody spoke of entertaining youth or even of 'retaining' youth. Turning Point was recognition that we have long passed that phase. Our youth don't want to be entertained by the church; nor will they be 'retained' by any program or activity we devise. They want to be the church, not within its traditional four walls, but where Christ calls them to be—out there.

Turning Point was about motivating and equipping our young people—and the older ones who work beside them—to transform our church into a place that is not just for the insiders but especially for the outsiders. In his opening remarks Pastor Roly Stahl said: 'It is better to share than it is to hoard. It is better to share the good things of God than to keep them for yourself. At the end you will be glad that our God who turned your life upside-down, also turned you inside-out!' □



Lutheran Youth pray for our church at Turning Point 2000.





From left: Jeremy Johns, Belinda Faulks, Kylie Breen and Joanne Ironside - four of the youth who attended Turning Point 2000 near Sydney, Australia.

Turning Point 2000

Rolly Stahl was chaplain at the Turning Point 2000 conference. As a pastor, he has served for over ten years in Liverpool (Sydney), and is currently serving at Woden Valley Lutheran Church in Canberra.

Turning Point 2000 marked some significant progressions in youth ministry over the last decade:

■ Turning from the focus on church-based programs to building relationships with those outside the church, breaking down the walls, and getting out there as kingdom people with those who don't yet know Jesus.

■ Turning from isolating youth ministry as a separate sphere of the local church's program to valuing the whole congregation as Christian community. Young people need the wisdom and encouragement from the older people; the older people need the vitality and passion of the young.

■ Turning from the loss of young people from our church to involving them in youth-friendly congregations and equipping them to reach their generation for Jesus in the circles where they relate in everyday life;

■ Turning from the focus on church-based programs to building relationships with those outside the church, breaking down the walls, and getting out there as kingdom people with those who don't yet know Jesus;

■ Turning from 'youth ministry' to 'youth and family ministry', recognising that the home is the most effective place of evangelism and discipleship. For maximum kingdom impact, we must help parents with this;

■ Turning from seeing the pastor of a congregation as the sole evangelist to seeing all people as evangelists who can all participate in Jesus' mission to save the world;

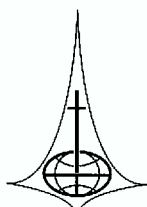
■ Turning from set forms of worship and outreach to multiple means of communication, and recognising that music, drama, festivals, movement and the visual arts are vital for reaching this emerging generation;

■ Turning from a local view of mission to a global perspective, and understanding that young people can serve as missionaries throughout the world. Opportunities are opening up for young people to work in Australia and overseas as interns or missionaries for a year. These are proving most significant turning points for faith development in young people;

■ Turning from isolating youth ministry as a separate sphere of the local church's program to valuing the whole congregation as Christian community. Young people need the wisdom and encouragement from the older people; the older people need the vitality and passion of the young;

■ Turning from sole reliance on innovative strategies to total reliance on God through prayer. □

Australian Youth



Thailand Building Sustainable Communities



Sagarika Chetty is a student at Madras University pursuing a PhD degree in the field of Political Science. She is a member of Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Pracha further stated, “I would draw inspiration from the Buddhist tradition to encourage localization/decentralization over globalization/monopolization. This kind of localization/decentralization does not conflict with international networking among civil society initiatives if it is not in the spirit of centralization.”

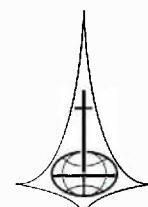
The basic position should be that the economic system exists for humankind and not the other way round. Further, it should emphasize that empowerment and participation of poor people and not accumulation of possessions are the basic organizing principles of economy.

“Now capitalism and democracy are the two great forces of the age. They unleash creativity and human potential. But they can be destructive too! They challenge the old order. Are we ready for the wild-ride of tomorrow?”

Today in the global village, the poor people are passing through a phase of transition and uncertainty. In this transitional phase, there is a strong need for human resource development. An alternative paradigm of education — aiming at the holistic development of a person, making him rational, courageous, confident and assertive — can be the appropriate strategy for this.

What do the Asian students and youth think about “Building Sustainable Communities” today? A group of 80 delegates representing 18 Asian Countries, gathered at Chiang Mai (Thailand) from 21-28 January 2000, in order to answer this question. The occasion was the “Asian Students and Youth Gathering 2000” (ASYG 2000).

A Thai farmer briefing about a network meant for sustainable development





Thai women explaining about the method of sustainable agricultural development

Kudos to the Asia Alliance of YMCAs (AAY), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) Youth, International Movement of Catholic Students Asia-Pacific (IMCS-AP), International Youth Christian Students (IYCS) Asia, World Student Christian Federation Asia Pacific (WSCF-AP)—The five organizers of the conference whose efforts gave an enriching experience to the participants. The audience had the privilege of listening to Pracha Hutunuwat, a Buddhist monk from Siam and Prof. Noh, Jong Sun from Yonsei University, Korea. The whole discourse on the theme: “Review, Reflect, Renew”: Building Sustainable Communities” - was in the context of globalization. This article seeks to present excerpts from the conference and a reflection thereof.

Pracha on Globalization from a Buddhist Perspective

Pracha Hutunuwat's speech on “Globalization from a Buddhist Perspective” was a corrective for the advocates of “Progress” in the name of consumerism and market-economy. The extracts:

“From a Buddhist perspective the very core of the Globalization process is the globalization of *Tanha* or craving.... *Tanha* is the root cause of all suffering ... From the Buddhist perspective, both the anthropocentric element and the belief in progress are basic wrong views. In Buddhism the concept of inter-relatedness is essential. If we seriously consider this, human beings can not be the ‘center of the universe’. We are just one among many species and our well being depends on the well being of other species and the natural environment”.

The Progress Myth

“The belief in progress moves from the ‘Present moment’. The causes and conditions of staying in

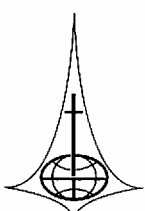
the ‘Present moment’ or the ‘moment of reality’ are of prime importance in Buddhism in the art of coping with suffering. Under the ‘Progress’ ethos, we are stimulated to expect that things will be better in the future at the cost of sacrificing the present reality. This belief in a progress is a kind of myth as it promises something that will never be completely fulfilled. Indeed the striving to fulfill this myth is the cause of *Tanha*”.

An Honest Introspection

On the issue of diminishing cultural values and escalating consumerism, Pracha was honest in his introspection.. As he put it: “The high ranking Buddhist monks in my country are forgetting the basic teachings of Buddha to live a simple life, ... these modern monks are competing with each other for the latest model of BMWs and Mercedes! The lay Buddhist of my generation ... use Buddhism only as ritualistic function in life... Today most lay Buddhists actually worship money and ‘Success’”.

Future of Globalization

Pracha's prediction about globalization is as follows: “Globalization, like anything else is impermanent and thus non-self and will last as long as causes and conditions allow it. Like all other tempting matters, we need to be aware of both positive and negative effects of globalization. Once we have enough critical awareness that the negative aspect outdoes the positive aspect, we will be able to go beyond or liberate ourselves from it... The future of the planet can not be and will not be the simple continuation of the present neo-conservative capitalism. ... The frustration and anger of the jobless and of the hungry (and unfulfilled) will be increasingly corroborated by the loss of confidence by a growing part of



humankind in the progress and happiness promised by capitalism and its development”.

The Alternative Buddhist Vision

Advocating an alternative Buddhist vision, Pracha said: “Happiness and real meaning of life come from the reduction of *Tanha* which will in turn open space for *Kusalamuta* (the wholesome qualities of life) to flourish (e.g. compassion, wisdom, generosity, and peace of mind.). This *Kusalamuta* will connect us to ourselves, to our fellow human beings and to nature. This does not mean that Buddhism rejects material well being. The point is to know and understand the limits of material well-being but not to let the means become the end.” He further stated, “I would draw inspiration from the Buddhist tradition to encourage localization/decentralization over globalization/monopolization. This kind of localization/decentralization does not conflict with international networking among civil society initiatives if it is not in the spirit of centralization.”

Noh on “Economic Justice in Globalization”

Need for policy reforms

Prof. Noh, Jong Sun’s talk was on “Economic Justice in Globalization”. Noh suggested few policy-reforms that were strikingly apt. In his thinking:

“The policy of economically just systems should be the policy in which people ... and the victims of globalization come first.”

The basic position should be that the economic system exists for humankind and not the other way round. Further, it should emphasize that empowerment and participation of poor people and not accumulation of possessions are the basic organizing principles of economy. In addition, economic policies should be based on justice for all, regardless of race, sex or caste, instead of piecemeal, paternalistic programs of charity. The unjust economic systems that force women, children and men into prostitution and other forms of sex industry should be abolished. In short, the basic needs of the people should determine economic policies and not the economic values and interests of transnational corporations and international monetary agencies.

The Third World War

Noh conceptualized the existing worldwide condition in saying that “there is third world war going on. Poor people become poorer and rich

people become richer in the global economy now days. What is the root of the problem? Food has been used as weapons to conquer and to colonize and to neo-colonize the weak native people. For the national security of the rich countries, human security has been systematically destroyed”.

The Strategies

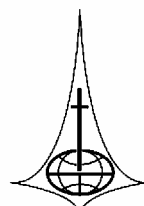
But then what should be the strategies to attain justice in such a world? Noh gave a select list saying:

“We need to build the preventive economy for the human security under global exploitations. We need to organize the exploited for revolutionary changes of the unjust global economic systems. We need to open (WWW.Exploited.org). He further stated, “‘freedom and democracy,’ under new imperial economy of the trilateral north, G-8, IMF, World Bank are very special ones. They are ‘freedom for the haves’ but not for the ‘have nots’. They are democracy for the neo-colonial trilateral north, but their freedom and democracy are the neo-totalitarian exploitations by the global hunters. Therefore freedom and democracy under the new political economy are another covert slavery and the new totalitarians rules, with no mercy and no tears. It means freedom to be poorer everyday for the neo-colonized people of the 80% of the two-third world.

The oppressed people need to de-construct the concepts like freedom, democracy, market economy and so forth of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the trilateral north and pax-Americana. The oppressed people need to reconstruct the genuine meaning of words like freedom for the oppressed and the needy, and democracy for the minjung (people)”.

Noh condemned the Western “human rights” paradigm as “the conceptual instrument of Santa Fe Strategy of the trilateral north, for their hegemonic expansion through exploitations and plundering of the human ecology of the planet mother earth”.

In his concluding remarks Noh claimed: “Text of liberation should be written from the experiences of the oppressed global minjung, ... the homeless in Manhattan, the migrant workers in Bangkok, the hungry in North Korea and the unemployed in South Korea. Praxis of liberation should come from the power of the coalition of the people in the world”.



Asian Youth's experience of Globalization

The other important aspect of the conference was the views of the delegates from different countries. To name a few:

Philippines

The Filipino youth criticized globalization for destroying sustainable communities in Philippines. According to them "Schemes of globalization denied the Filipino peasants freedom from the bondage of feudal monopoly. More and more farmers and national minorities are threatened by massive displacement." In the context of displacement and environmental hazard the Filipinos brought out the issue of Mindoro, an open-pit mining operation of MINDEX. It is the smallest mining operator in Mindoro and a local subsidiary of MINDEX ASA in Norway, that spells the massive destruction of land and environment over 9000 ha of the Mindoro island. This operation will succeed in extracting nickel and cobalt deposits, but will cause the displacement of Mangyans, local farmers and residents of Mindoro.

Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar

Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar focussed on the issue of the impact of globalization on education. To them, "the deregulation of tuition in private schools has worsened the commercialization of education. Privatization has led the state colleges and Universities to collect high tuition fees from the students, thus weakening and denying the youth's access to quality education".

Indonesia

The Indonesians, however, termed globalization as enlightenment modernism, democracy, civilization science, technology and knowledge. They defined globalization as "a process of equalization, especially in technology world. But at the same time they seemed to understand the contextual challenge posed by the present world order. As they stated rightly:

"Now capitalism and democracy are the two great forces of the age. They unleash creativity and human potential. But they can be destructive too! They challenge the old order. Are we ready for the wild-ride of tomorrow?"

Hong Kong

The Hong Kong youth shared their experience of market economy as follows:

"Under capitalism, our society emphasizes effectiveness and market value while neglects love among people. People become self-centered, passive and shortsighted. Injustice is considered as taken for granted. Therefore, the poor and weak receive little concern. For the youth, the education system fails to help. Their choices are limited: following the trend of a dominant society. They keep on equipping themselves with new information and technology to fit in the changing society, but easily get overwhelmed by the information they can get from, for example, Internet."

Australia

For the Australians, globalization is something that exists but does not concern them greatly. Lisa Jackson, an indigenous young lady states:

"We indigenous Australians make up 2.1% of the total population. We have a high rate of mortality and our elders die relatively young. This is due to poor health, lack of housing and inadequate education and unemployment. To indigenous Australians, globalization is something that is hard to understand. If we are to achieve the goal of getting indigenous Australians to think about globalization, we must address the problems we have with our people first."

India

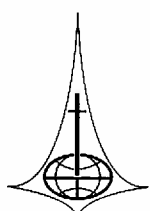
The Indian youth criticized globalization for causing displacement, unemployment and increasing consumerism.

Common Areas of concern

The common areas of concern identified by the delegates were human rights violation, escalating consumerism, currency devaluation, high unemployment, cultural erosion, commercialization of education, commodification of women, migration, displacement, resource-depletion, environmental degradation, corruption and unjust political economy.

Possible Action plans

The last important aspect of the conference was the reflection on possible action plans for building sustainable communities. Making websites about movements; sensitization on various issues like indigenous peoples' rights, gender, education, environment and so on; networking with other international organizations were some of the possible strategies suggested by the gathering.



A Personal Reflection

I have a few personal comments to make on the much-discussed topic: "Building sustainable communities".

During our informal conversation, many young people shared with a note of frustration that the suffering lacked the initiative to counter the unjust system. What I feel is, there is a need of deeper analysis of the problem. It took not less than 20-25 years of education, sensitization and exposure for the caring and energetic gathering of ASYG to see globalization critically. Then think of those people who have never been to school, never hired a bus, whose world revolved around the family, community,

the paddy field, forest and the small market down the hill where barter was the system! For decades, nay, for centuries, they were an untouched, segregated section within the nation blissfully enjoying self-sufficiency. And now because of globalization, for their land seems to earn lucrative foreign exchange for the National Interest, they have to move. The issue enjoys the centrality in the intellectual field due to tenor and trend of the political economy. For the advocates of marketization, this is the privilege contributed by capitalism. But for a community that is/was essentially closed and self-centered, that has almost no understanding of any other system surrounding it — even, the state/government for that matter, when change comes to it in the form of displacement (or extinction?) — what will be the reaction? Dismay, fear, uncertainty and lack of confidence are a few words to explain the situation. It will take time for them to absorb the shock, analyze the situation and initiate a change.

The "present moment" does not provide the congenial environment for "contentment". Hence, change of that obstructing environment is a must. Appropriate strategies are essential for this. People must know about their own history, economy, culture and heritage (all at the verge of extinction?). They need to be cognizant of the geography, the environment and the resources therein. They have to understand; what are the forces, that are causing changes in their life-style

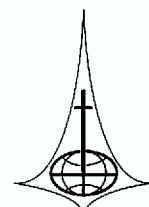


A group of Asian Youth participating at the ASYG 2000. The author, Sagarika, far left standing.

and why. On the basis of all these, the community has to build up a sustainable life-style! A Herculean task indeed.

Again, for the successful execution of preventive strategies, what people need most today is, the fastest means of communication. How long will it take for the 28% illiterate Asian population to have access to the fastest means of communication is a pertinent question. Today in the global village, the poor people are passing through a phase of transition and uncertainty. In this transitional phase, there is a strong need for human resource development. An alternative paradigm of education — aiming at the holistic development of a person, making him rational, courageous, confident and assertive — can be the appropriate strategy for this. This critical time should be the base for the evolution of a transformed community that is equipped with the means of sustainable development. NGOs can contribute in this task of model building.

One last question. Let us presume that all those suffering were able to protest the adverse effect of globalization. Should that be the end of journey? Maybe not. A wiser choice will be finding the avenues in globalization that can be used for the advantage of the deprived section. What prospects are there stored/offered by globalization for this section of society, or how globalization can be molded for the benefit of the losers of the present world order will be another discourse. But it is worth a try. □



What a Feast!

Patricia Solomon is originally from the Bahamas. A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, she has worked in various youth and ecumenical ministries, and accompanied the LWF representatives during their visit to Chicago. Patty is presently pursuing a Masters of Divinity degree.

The vision of the young adults is to be able to make positive contributions in the ongoing dialogue between churches.

The "Come to the Feast" Young Adult gathering, May 25- June 1, 2000, as one of the events in which the Lutheran World Federation-Youth in Church and Society (YICAS) participated, was a successful event. The event, held in Chicago, was a part of the "Vision Beyond 2000" program which brought together youth from various walks of life and denominations.

The LWF-YICAS was represented by Rev. Teresita Valeriano, along with Modris Pavasars of Colombia, Adele Lim of Singapore and Elzbieta Byrtek of Poland. This event proved to be an opportunity to learn from and inform others about the work of the LWF-YICAS, as well as providing an opportunity to discuss the current issues and concerns concerning the church in other countries as perceived by the participants.

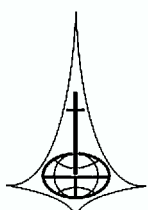
An integral part of the conference included ecumenical worship services. It was during the services that participants had an opportunity not only to feast at the Lord's Table, but also to partake in the rich diversity of worship forms repre-

sented. Consisting of contemporary music and led by lay and clergy persons alike, these services spoke to the ordinary life of the young adults, and exposed youth to different forms of denominational worship. One memorable service was led by a pastor from the Brethren tradition, Rev. Sherri Haman, who has Native American heritage. She taught the participants very moving songs, stories, and rituals and spoke of the similarities of the spiritual expression and beliefs of her Cherokee people and that of her Christian faith. Rev. Haman captured the audience's attention as she brought messages of stewardship of the Earth and all God's creation, respect for humanity and love of and obedience to God.

Of course, there was a cornucopia of keynote addresses and workshops as well. With so many to choose from, it was sometimes difficult not to secretly wish that one could be in two places at once! Rev. Rodger Nishioka, a dynamic speaker and Associate Professor of Christian Education and Young Adult Ministry (Columbia Theological Seminary), presented an extremely thought-provoking discussion on the topic of the "Generation X" phenomenon within the North American context. There was an opportunity to participate in an in-depth skills-building course in Young Adult Ministry led by Rev. Nishioka, and a workshop on "Justice or Just Us".

The latter workshop raised the issues concerning the impact of the socioeconomic power of the U.S. over poor developing countries and encouraged discussion about national and international social injustice. The former workshop gave the participants more tools needed in

LWF Representatives to "Come to the Feast". From Left: Elzbieta Byrtek, Patty Solomon, Modris Pavasars, Tita Valeriano and Adele Lim



developing Young Adult Ministries. Other workshops included topics as "Young Adults in the Post-Modern World and Post-Christian Era" and "Face to Face: Spirituality of Young Women and Men," among many others to numerous to mention.

An ecumenical event would be incomplete without the opportunity for ecumenical discussions. Needless to say, this conference gave ample opportunity to do just that. A joint denominational gathering between the Episcopalians and the Lutherans provide a chance for theology students and young adult leaders alike to exchange ideas regarding the situation of the denominations concerned within the national and global context. Here too, participants was given an opportunity to express aloud their concerns, challenges and joys experienced within their specific context. In addition, the YICAS was given an opportunity to share its objectives, programs and vision. Positive feedback was received and interest in a possible North American Youth Consultation and Networking sizzled in the minds of those present. Last, but by no means least, was a discussion of the document on the communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church. This document called the "Called to Common Mission (CCM)" is one the strongly debated documents between the two churches to date.

Lest you think this conference was "all work and no play," let me say a few words about the 'play'. There were tours of the city, which included visits to churches, seminaries and Evangelical Lutheran Church of America headquarters. Small group social gatherings provided the venue for spirited games of Pictionary, barbecues and lots of just 'plain old fun'!

In conclusion, I would like to make a few remarks about this event from an observer's point of view. The last year of my life, and the first at seminary, proved to be a very challenging one. In the midst of all the Hebrew, History and Greek courses, I was faced with the challenge of defining what it means to be ecumenical. The last year was filled with the challenge of coming to a common understanding and agreement upon the CCM document, which I mentioned previously

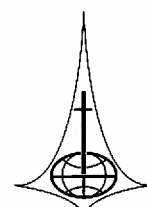


Dr. Job Ebenezer, ELCA's Environmental Stewardship and Hunger Education presenting Container Gardens on the roof top of a building just across the ELCA main headquarters in Chicago



Elzbieta, Modris and Adele serving the Communion at the closing worship

as the joint declaration between the Lutherans and Anglicans. It was often a great challenge to engage in dialogues with other denominations and the temptation is often to see each other's differences as a threat to one's particular doctrinal or denominational belief. Indeed, even more recently, a statement issued by the Vatican, which proposed that the Catholic church is the one true church, sent waves of turbulence throughout other denominations within the Christian faith. Why do I say this? It is simply to say that the "Come to the Feast" young adult gathering was for me, an effective model in ecumenical discussions. The organizers of this event and indeed those present recognize the fact the being able to discuss differences in an effective manner is what is needed of the youth in the 21st century. The vision of the young adults is to be able to make positive contributions in the ongoing dialogue between churches. In my opinion, this event proved to be a starting point for realizing such a goal, and it is hoped that the youth present would continue the work in their respective denominations. □



Turkey

Youth in the Church in the Third Millennium



Janis Pauliks is the coordinator of the Youth Department of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.

Hagia Sophia,
Istanbul, Turkey

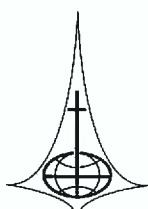
The Mother Church, the Holy and Great Church of Christ, is as new today as it was nearly twenty centuries ago.

The Encounter of Orthodox Youth took place from June 18-25, 2000, in Istanbul, Turkey. This conference, with the theme of "The youth in the Church in the third millennium", gathered over more than 650 participants from all around the world. It was an unexpectedly rich experience to see such a historically important country for Christianity as Turkey, as the venue for the work with the Orthodox youth. Anatolia has been the site of many of the most important events in the history of Christianity. Right now Istanbul (Byz-

antine, Constantinople) is one of the most fascinating cities of the world, a city bridging two continents, Asia and Europe, and the capital of three great empires in the past.

The aim of the program was to combine serious and high quality conference work with well-organized leisure time and excursions. The accommodation and the organization provided by the Ecumenical Patriarchate was excellent and the participants felt at home.

The general issues for presentations and discussions showed that youth experience some of the same problems all over the world. Young people from the Orthodox church, mostly of Greek origin, discussed such important questions as young people and the question of the ministry and Monasticism. Also discussed were the phenomena of HIV/AIDS and drugs; language and religious identity; the relation of the two genders; war and peace; social justice and human rights; ecology and unemployment. It became clear that the world in



the next century will bring new challenges for the Christian church. It is our responsibility not to solve all the problems, but to give answers and hope for this world, because "...God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn.3:16).

For me personally, it was very interesting to listen to discussions about the language of Greek liturgy as the subject of national and Greek Orthodox identity and how the two are related. Most of the Greek youth who live abroad find it very difficult that the language of liturgy is officially allowed only in Greek, even outside of Greece. For the evangelical world this question was solved at the time of Luther and that is a great advantage.

His all Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said at the opening of the conference:

"Christian enthusiasm is the only condition that uniquely defines those who are truly young, who are young in spirit and way of thinking, whose youth is renewed like the eagle's according to the Psalmist's promise" (Ps.102:5).

The Mother Church, the Holy and Great Church of Christ, is as new today as it was nearly twenty centuries ago. All the years that have elapsed have not weighed down her youthfulness by all the elements that time adds to the corruptible human body. Why? Because her nature is spiritual and the provider of her youthfulness is our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ "is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hb.13:8). Although the Ancient of Days, He is eternally new, tireless and indomitable. He works unceasingly for salvation of a disobedient world as One whose love never fails but is ever living, active and salvific."

At the end of the Orthodox Youth encounter a final report of the Conference was accepted as a short summary of the conference work. A Website was created for this Conference: www.orthodoxyouthww.org.

I think it was a great opportunity for me to participate in this conference together with other observers from LWF – Anna Hrobonova (Slovakia) and Saija Kronquist (Finland).

We could see the problems in a different way and discussed them and make stronger links for cooperation in future. I appreciated very much this

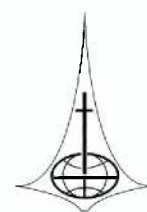


Participants
enjoying Greek
dancing at the
steps of a mosque

possibility provided by LWF Youth Desk to be their representative in such an important Orthodox youth event. Above all, we are grateful for this new experience and we want to improve the dialog between Lutheran and Orthodox youth in the future. We hope that the different contacts made during the conference will result in future work on different levels. □



Janis Pauliks and
Anna Hrobonova,
LWF delegates to
the gathering



Sweden

European Lutheran Youth Pilgrimage: A New Way of Being One



Photo by T. Valeria

Feet that trod the
various paths to
Vadstena, Sweden

The whole experience highlighted and reflected on the rich diversity from which all were coming, the unity and stewardship of the whole creation, the new challenges and hope in our faith journey in church and society and the greater awareness and embodiment of the vision of a communion of churches.

Bishop Lind brought together, in his message, the experience of a pilgrim: walking with the whole creation, and the journey towards the inclusive communion of churches signified by the coming together and the breaking of the bread in their journey.

Youth seek meaningful expressions of these relationships. However, through the pilgrimage, they were able to pass another road of this searching with deeper understanding of who they are and with a greater awareness and commitment of their calling in Jesus Christ.

In the midst of the inevitable rise of high technology cars on superhighways, how did the European Lutheran youth celebrate the millennium? They walked. The first ever European Lutheran Youth Pilgrimage brought together around 500 young people from 17 Central, Western and Eastern European countries. They gathered around the theme "Stand up and Walk" as it took place in Vadstena, northeastern Sweden.

This event was Initiated and hosted by the Diocese of Linköping, through an invitation

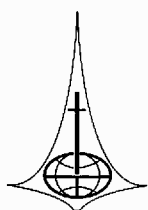
from its Bishop, The Rev. Martin Lind, and in coordination with the Church of Sweden and LWF Youth Desk.

Walking through Vadstena for three days between August 4-9, 2000 was a symbolic way to welcome the millennium and celebrate 2000th year of Christ's birth seeking peace, unity and reconciliation through prayer, worship, and dialogue.

The whole experience highlighted and reflected on the rich diversity from which all were coming, the unity and stewardship of the whole creation, the new challenges and hope in our faith journey in church and society and the greater awareness and embodiment of the vision of a communion of churches.

Pilgrimage: A metaphor of our faith journey

Just like our faith journey, routes were varied but there are crossroads along the way and a final destination in this pilgrimage. Young men and women walked in small groups of about 10 for five hours daily covering 15 to 22 kilometers. Starting with six stations strategically located around Vadstena, they eventually converged and met in five stations which were further reduced to two stations on the third day before their final walk to Vadstena. Everyday they encountered new friends, new stories, new challenges and new places. Some walked on the paved road, others through the fields and hills, and yet others passed through the forest or by the lake, each way leading to one final destination, Vadstena. Carrying only a knapsack that contained essential items, each pilgrim ventured forward while also carrying a stone from the home country, symbolic of both their burdens and joys shared along the way.



They walked in simplicity and slept in school's classrooms and church's halls. Pilgrims were reminded that they can still walk side by side in spite of different backgrounds and culture, varied gifts and calling.

Just like our faith journey, the pilgrimage was also full of ups and downs but one will never be alone. During the walk, many were fueled with energy because of the hope that Vadstena would be a place to rest and enjoy the whole group. Sometimes, though tiredness and impatience dampened this spirit of hope. Would one allow hunger and exhaustion to stop the journey or one would take a short cut leaving behind others? On the other hand, this physical limitation also caused youth to reflect of the necessity and importance of "being with one another" in walking as a church. As Eszter Horvath of Hungary, one of the participants shared,

"Walking in small groups made it easier to listen to others, to help if problems arose, to share food, thoughts, to get to know each other's culture and to hear God's voice."

The Pilgrimage: A Prayer

The whole event was filled with prayers and worship services, so unique that they were characterized with the integration of our apostolic tradition, the youth's diverse background and creativity, and its relevance to our times.

A reflection began and closed each day emphasizing the seven values of pilgrimage: simplicity, silence, slowness, spirituality, freedom, sharing and "do not worry" – as taught by Fr. Hans-Erik Lindstrom, pastor at the Pilgrims Center in Vadstena.

Each group stopped on the hour for an "every full-hour" prayer. [Picture 5 – A group of pilgrims worshipping along the way to Vadstena.] The three-day walk culminated in a multi-cultural worship centered on the theme "That They May Be One" at the town's Abbey Church. Pilgrims had the opportunity to fit their fingers into the holes believed to be marked by Saint Birgitta as they entered the church. This experience reminded them of those who have gone before them and have given them inspiration to reflect on what one can offer for the future generation.

Prayers were offered in different languages, symbolic of varied concerns with a common hope. At the same time worship songs and music were included from all over the world. Bishop Lind brought together, in his message, the experience of a pilgrim: walking with the whole creation, and the

journey towards the inclusive communion of churches signified by the coming together and the breaking of the bread in their journey.

The pilgrimage was truly an experience of prayer both in a community and in solitude.

The Pilgrimage: A unique way of being a communion

What does youth in communion mean? Whenever a youth defines the word "communion" the word "inclusive" is often attached to it. For some of the youth, it simply means a sense of "belonging." For some, it goes beyond unity and reconciliation, as an inclusive communion highlights not only the commonality but also celebrates

Pilgrims from Italy, Sweden and other parts of Central Eastern Europe on the first day of walking.



Photo by Diocese of Linköping

the diversity and differences with a shared respect for all. Youth are aware that in a communion of churches, one of the challenges is to bring everybody around the table as equals, since sharing sometimes becomes an opportunity to use power over rather than power with one another. However, this event became a unique embodiment of a communion of churches where everyone was welcomed and could walk side by side with someone from another place and tradition. Some youth from the Roman Catholic Church and Reformed Churches who joined the pilgrimage strengthened this experience. They encountered God and the creation, not as chosen delegates but simply as children of God in unity. The young pilgrims expressed this communion not through resolutions and recommendations but rather through the experience of one another and the sharing at the table of the Lord with strangers who later became their friends.

They shared gifts with thoughts of those who were not present and also of those who do not have the

A pilgrim from Czech Republic during one of the every hour prayer using the Pilgrim's booklet.

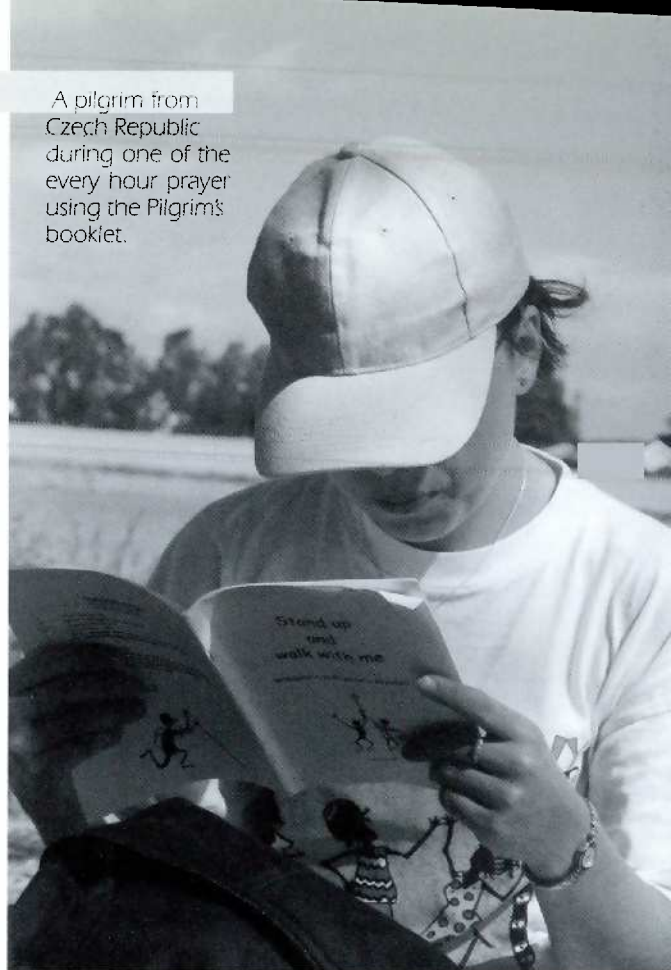


Photo by T. Valeriano

privileges they enjoy. By remembering the brothers and sisters not present in the course of their prayers, they reflected on the strength and blessings of these people from whom they could learn.

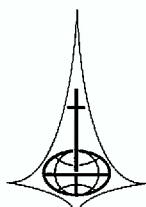
The experience of a communion was not an isolated reality during this pilgrimage, but rather through the journey, it showed a way to continue being one wherever their journey takes them after leaving Vadstena. During the closing worship, each pilgrim, after receiving the bread and wine, took one pebble, offered by another youth, to take home. The pilgrims offered the pebbles which they carried as a symbolical gesture of offering all our burdens and cares to God. It may be difficult if not impossible to trace whose stone it was, but each one for sure brought home with them a part of another participant and the whole group. This symbolical act gave meaning to the vision of a communion that knows no gender, race, culture, and class division.

The last two days in Vadstena were spent attending seminars and workshops. Seminars were focused on mission, spirituality, socio-political and economic issues, ecumenical movement and youth networking. Workshops focused on spiritual exercises and discipline, art, music and drama. Truly, gifts and talents abound as they explored possibilities for personal and spiritual growth. This experience taught them that the church is a people who seek to develop their potentials to the fullest in order to serve God and the whole creation.

Bishop Martin Lind with one of the pilgrims



Photo by K. Manz





Pilgrimage.

A Window to the Future

What will happen now? For the last three years, different people contributed their time, gifts of administration, management, music, and resources to make this vision a reality. For three days, pilgrims offered thanksgiving in walking and praying. For another three days, youth shared and gained from each other their gifts and talents.

But we know that our mission does not only last for three years nor three days. We also know there is so much more at stake for our young people today in the midst of the uncertainties of the new century that cannot be addressed by one gathering. Youth seek realistic ways to understand their existence in relation to God and the whole creation. Youth seek meaningful expressions of these relationships. However, through the pilgrimage, they were able to pass another road of this searching with deeper understanding of who they are and with a greater awareness and commitment of their calling in Jesus Christ.

Will this pilgrimage experience create a new understanding of this tradition for all in the young people's encounter with God and one another? Will the sacred paths and places they passed by pave a new way of "becoming" a communion? Will this experience challenge the vision of the youth in church and society? Has this pilgrimage opened the window for the Eastern European and the Western European youth to see and find ways of serving one another?

Perhaps some of us will still see and anticipate the future through the invention of the most sophisticated cars that will "fly" on the highways, things that may bring us in some places but not in the place where God wants us to be. Eszter Horv  th's reflection continues,

Weeks have passed and I still have the sounds,

voices, colors, and feelings in my heart. I like it. It makes me happy and it's very nice to remember and to recall those events that happened in Sweden in August. However, I hope that amidst all the activities, people felt God's loving presence and also took home something enriching. It is vital to be conscious about our mission, to convey God's message towards everybody who needs it.

For the youth, it is not the piety of being able to walk and reach a certain place, but rather it is the encounter with the living God in the faces of those whom they met and with whom they trod that matters.

The pilgrimage to Vadstena showed that the youth are the visible fruits of a communion. Though struggling to be heard and to lead the way for the church, they still come together for a cause, to be who they are and to respect and serve the whole creation. Truly, this pilgrimage happened not to give the youth something to do, but through it, the church has received a new vitality of its existence towards being one, both for today and the future. Hence, the journey continues. □

Photo by T. Valeriano

The pilgrimage staff who worked hard and gave their best.

A pilgrim from Latvia in awe of God's creation.



African Youth Networking:

Moving into Action

South Africa (by Wolf Gaerdes)

The Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) Youth Network had its founding conference on March 15-19, 1999 at the Lutheran Conference Center in Bonaero Park in South Africa. The conference was sponsored by the LWF Youth Desk and was convened to find mechanisms to empower the youth in the region to begin to find ways of responding to the global challenges confronting our societies, especially in relation to the economic situation. The LUCSA Youth Network includes 13 churches in eight countries.

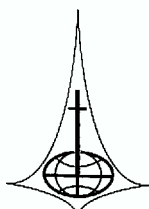
A Bible study during the conference was conducted by Rev. Desmond Lesejane on Acts 2:17. He stressed the need for the youth to focus their energies on a vision, in order to make it a reality. Dr. Molefe Tsele addressed the conference participants on the theme entitled "Forwards to the New Millennium: Challenges Facing the Christian

Youth Movement." Mr. Enos Moyo presented a paper on "Youth and Development." The LWF Youth in Church and Society desk sent a paper on youth networking which was used as a guide for the process and enabled the meeting to move with speed regarding the question of structure.

It was decided by delegates to the LUCSA Youth Network, representing their respective churches, to form a three-person committee elected every three years. This structure is in line with LUCSA's own process of a three-year cycle of General Conference. In addition, the LUCSA Youth Network should be represented at LUCSA executive meetings and the General Conference. Finally, viable projects should be highlighted to ensure funding.

The youth committee of three persons was elected: Mr. Jacob Dikobo as Chairperson, Mr. Ernst Eiseb as Secretary, and Rev. Georg Meyer as Treasurer.

LUCSEA Youth Meeting



The gender issue was raised as a matter of concern given that there was only one female delegate at this meeting. It was agreed that the LUCSA Youth Network should not make this a constitutional item, but should work on the attitude of their constituency concerning this crucial matter. Encouragement towards gender equality should be advocated in all programs.

In conclusion, the conference discussed proposed projects such as communication, sharing of information, evangelism in the region, city mission, self-help projects, skill development and educational programs.

Through this network, a series of HIV/AIDS awareness workshop were held in four sub-regional centers during the months of December 1999 and January 2000.

At present, LUCSA youth are working on establishing a website to continue to address youth issues concerning HIV/AIDS, capacity building and economic literacy all of which are among the group's highest priorities. A central event is planned for the second half of November 2000.

Central and East Africa (Paul Kamau)

The Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA) youth network, composed of twelve churches in nine countries, met under the theme "Whom Shall I Send?" (Isaiah 6:8a) in Nairobi, Kenya, from August 20 to 22, 2000 (P1 – The LUCCEA Youth Networking Meeting delegates). This was the second meeting after its establishment in Arusha, Tanzania on July 1999. Paul Kamau of Kenya, a LWF Youth representative to the Council, organized this meeting to further the work of the network.

Some major decisions made by the youth leaders were that of electing a Chairperson, Mr. Abdi Tadesse of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, drawing of a one year plan, increasing youth delegates as members of the committee in order to encourage equal participation of young men and women. Finally, a decision was made to underline some of the basic guiding principles of the committee for

effective communication and administration. Moreover, the position of Vice-Chairperson was decided to be filled by a young woman only until the next year's Youth meeting and LUCCEA General Assembly.

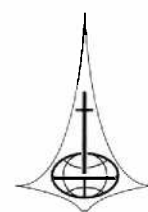
Youth issues on HIV/AIDS, unemployment and socio-political problems, such as poverty, abortion, trauma from war and genocide, teenage pregnancies and school drop outs were seriously taken into account as they drew their plan for the coming years. They are also aware of the need for leadership training, pastoral care and advocacy for children's rights, which were highlighted at the last meeting.

In the midst of these challenges faced by some church leaders, the LUCCEA General Secretary, Mr. Mathew Dambala strongly encouraged the youth to share information and stories with each other. Bishop Zachariah Wachira Kahuthu of Kenya Evangelical Lutheran, the host church, challenged the youth to respond positively to God's calling of serving the youth in the region, and Dr Coulette Bouka Coula presented the work of the Lutheran World Federation so that each can actively participate in its global ministry.

Paul Kamau will present the highlights and concerns from this meeting at the next Church Leaders Meeting in Madagascar.

West Africa

Established on July 27-August 1, 1998 in Garoua, Cameroon, the Lutheran Communion of Churches in West Africa (LUCWA) Youth Network continues to find way to strengthen the youth participation in church and society. The LUCWA Youth network is composed of nine churches in seven countries. At this first meeting youth issues and challenges concerning evangelism through effective use of media, education on basic human rights, youth leadership training, HIV/AIDS and finally youth skill development were discussed. Rev. Hamadou Salomon is taking the responsibility of LUCWA youth coordinator together with David Udo and Obot Ufford, both of Nigeria. □



German National Committee

Youth Committee Role Redefined for the Future

Tobias Treseler has been a youth pastor of Church of Lippe since 1994, and is currently the coordinator of the GNC -Youth Committee. His works and interest include creating youth worship services, playing modern Christian pop music, solo or with a band, and research on religious languages that can be formulated for and understood by young people in a secular society, which sometimes lead to publishing its results.

Youth Ministry must become more and more an integral part of Lutheran churches in Germany and should not be perceived as a separate entity in and of itself.

On May 12-14, in Ploen (Schleswig-Holstein), the Youth Committee (YC) of the German National Committee (GNC) which consists of youth delegates from member churches of the GNC met to essentially redefine their role in future of the church. Also participating in the conference was Rev. Teresita Valeriano from the Lutheran World Federation Youth Desk.

The conference, which involved reports about the situation of youth work in the GNC, emphasized the need for dialogue between the generations within the church. The results of the last major youth evaluation sponsored by Shell Corporation, published in March, revealed that the majority of German youth have little or no interest in participating in traditional forms of church work and/or worship services. Such results fur-

ther suggest that there is much work to be done in terms of reconnecting the younger generation with the church. It was felt that Youth Ministry must to become more and more an integral part of Lutheran churches in Germany and should not be perceived as a separate entity in and of itself. The Lutheran church needs the active participation of young people, which includes allowing them an opportunity to contribute their ideas, talents, questions and prayers. This can be facilitated by the acquisition of qualified youth leaders who can motivate young people to look for their "home" so to speak in the Lutheran churches.

Some of the tasks of this committee include establishing an advisory council for the GNC and the LWF Youth Desk regarding all questions concerning Youth in Church and Society (YICAS). This committee will also support youth delegates who qualify for international meetings and conferences. Further, the youth committee strongly supports all attempts of keeping church leaders informed about the generation gaps; of establishing a youth liaison to the LWF-YICAS desk; of recommending to the member churches that they delegate the youth committee persons as liaisons; and of establishing a regional network for the exchange of ideas, information and resources among the sub-regions in Europe (namely West-Central, East, North and Baltic). All of the recommendations and ideas that came out of the meeting can aid in reaching and communicating at the "grass-roots" level. □

GNC-YC at work:
from left Rev. Tobias
Treseler, Angela
Nitzsche
(Meckelburg),
Karin Manz
(standing,
Württemberg),
Arnulf Kaus
(Sachsen), Ronny
Pasedag
(Pommern) and
Friederike
Kolakowski (Lippe)



South African

Lutheran Youth's Events on Culture and Women

Moses Ntsebatlela

Gospel songs were used to praise God, dramas were used to portray the lives and challenges faced by Christians, and poetry was the art that portrayed the pressures and pleasures of living with different cultures.

Culture

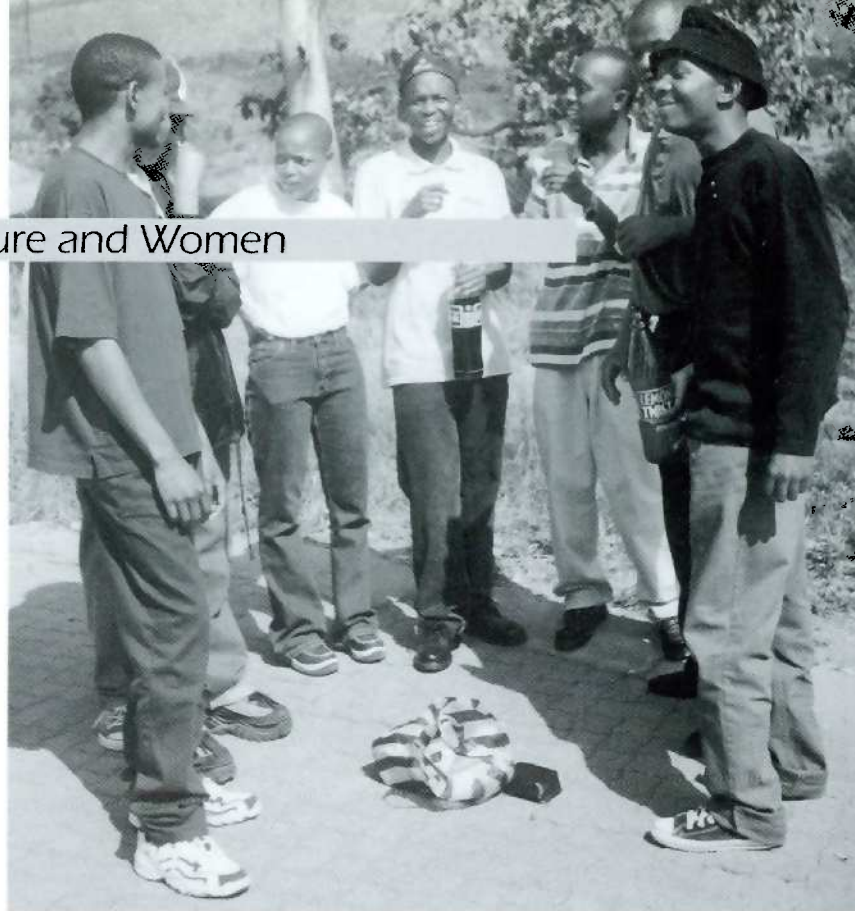
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA), Northern Diocese held another youth cultural weekend and also celebrated the national Women's Day. The former is an annual event where South African Lutherans come together to display and present their various cultural activities. Together, Lutherans from various cultural backgrounds share ideas, skills and appreciate other people's cultures (P1 – Youth members from different places with varied cultural backgrounds sharing ideas and enjoying the experience of diversity). This event, which will ultimately generate a greater impact in a broader context of the reigning unity and democratic era in South Africa, was attended by six circuits that make up the Northern Diocese: Mphome Circuit, Tshawane Circuit, Devhola-Lebowa Circuit, Bohlabela Circuit, Botšhabelo Circuit and Polokwane Circuit. The program included activities such as sports, gospel, choral, and cultural music/dance, masquerades, drama, poetry and modern dance. An exhibition of cultural attires was also held which facilitated mutual educational activities among the youth from various places.

Leadership

Congregational and parish youth leaders met during the event and compared notes on their mode of operation at their various youth levels. Leaders exchanged ideas, searched for advice, and shared their skills on how to solve local problems. This interaction created some uniformity concerning the activities undertaken by various youth leagues in the diocese. Some deans and pastors from various circuits came to support the occasion and fully participated in the spiritual intonation of the whole gathering.

Sports and social evening

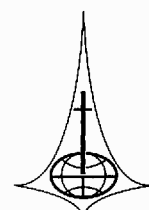
The various sport activities included soccer, volleyball and netball. Circuits competed among themselves. During the social evening, music, drama, poetry and masquerades were performed



on the stage. All these categories conveyed important messages about the lives of Christians in the world that we live in today. All of us enjoyed the music and hence, this was the climax of the whole event. Gospel songs were used to praise God, dramas were used to portray the lives and challenges faced by Christians, and poetry was the art that portrayed the pressures and pleasures of living with different cultures. Messages were presented in different languages, but the central idea was clearly evident in all genres

National Women's Day

The last day of the event coincided with the National Women's Day, which is celebrated on August 9 by all women in South Africa. This is a day when all women celebrate their equality and rights as contained in the bill for human rights in South Africa. Women in the Northern Diocese celebrated this in a very spirited manner. It is a well-known fact that women were neglected for a very long time and violence against women is still being perpetrated at alarming rates around the globe. This matter was of great concern and was thoroughly discussed by the women. Guest speakers, who were invited to shed light on the situation facing women today, encouraged all women to stand up for themselves and make the world a friendly place to be. After the celebration, the women were filled with a renewed enthusiasm and hope that the situation for many women would gradually be improved. Generally, the whole event was educationally, socially, intellectually and spiritually rewarding. □



Nuevas actividades en el Cono Sur

Campamento Mar del Plata 2000

Lucas
Veira Sand
from
Argentina
©LWF/C

Lucas Veira Sand es el coordinador de la subregión Cono Sur en la actualidad. También ha comenzado su labor como interno de la oficina de juventud en octubre del 2000.

Durante el transcurso de febrero pasado, tuvimos la alegría en la IELU (Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida) –Argentina y Uruguay– de contar con un encuentro juvenil de carácter sinodal. Este campamento tuvo como eje central el tema “amarás a tu prójimo como a ti mismo”; y tanto sus objetivos y metodologías como los momentos litúrgicos, fueron logrados muy satisfactoriamente y en su totalidad. Contamos con la grata presencia de 57 participantes de los distritos rioplatense, oeste y sur de esta iglesia, así como también de jóvenes de las iglesias del Cono Sur.

Tuvimos el agrado de tener, como en Tandil '99 (ver Youth Magazine anterior), la visita de personas de las iglesias vecinas; en este caso, dos jóvenes de la ILCH (Iglesia Luterana en Chile), dos participantes de la IELCH (Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Chile) y dos personas de la IERP (Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata –Argentina, Uruguay y Paraguay); otros jóvenes fueron invitados y no pudieron asistir en esta ocasión, pero manifestaron su intención de participar, cuestión que de seguro se logrará en los próximos eventos. Los invitados demostraron gran entusiasmo e interés en la dinámica del campamento, por lo cual proyectamos un trabajo mancomunado entre las Iglesias hermanas del Cono Sur- Brasil. Esto vislumbra un paso más del proyecto comunicacional entre las mencionadas iglesias, y se enmarca en los compromisos asumidos en Rodeio 12 (1998) acerca de la Red de Comunicaciones y Juventud Latinoamericana, apoyados por la FLM.

La ubicación escogida para realizar este evento resultó ser muy interesante: Mar del Plata, Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina; este lugar donde estuvo sito el campamento se encuentra sobre la costa atlántica, por lo cual pudimos –entre otras cosas– disfrutar de un paisaje marítimo muy bello. La infraestructura del lugar nos permitió realizar las actividades tanto de estudio como recreacionales en óptimas condiciones. Muchos jóvenes tuvieron la oportunidad de conocer tanto el mar como la ciudad de Mar del Plata, así como también para varios otros esta fue la primera vez en asistir a un campamento de la iglesia.

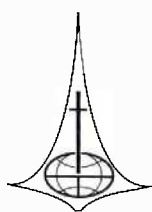
La coordinación estuvo a cargo de miembros de la Secretaría de Juventud de la IELU. La preparación y planeamiento del campamento fueron organizados por esta coordinación. Se



realizaron reuniones diarias entre los coordinadores para conversar las distintas cuestiones e imponderables, discutiendo y delineando posturas, para llegar así, a una solución en común. Este trabajo fue intenso y enriquecedor a la vez.

Durante el campamento compartimos seis estudios bíblicos con relación a la temática central: “Ama a tu prójimo como a ti mismo”. Para un mejor entendimiento del estudio nos reuníamos en seis grupos; tres grupos de participantes de 14 a 16 años y tres grupos de jóvenes de 17 años en adelante. El estudio del tema diario se desarrollaba en la mañana; luego en la tarde se llevaba a cabo un plenario, en el cual, cada grupo exponía lo reflexionado en el día, ya sea en forma de dinámica, de representación teatral o de una exposición de lo estudiado. En este plenario se sintetizaban y organizaban las ideas trabajadas en torno al tema. Los estudios se caracterizaron por estar muy bien relacionados y conectados entre sí y por tener de fondo una sólida teología luterana. Además de vincular temas como: amor, juicio, misión, etc., en el marco de una relación con el contexto actual, lo cual aportó mucho a una visión cristiana de nuestra misión como hijos de Dios.

Estamos muy entusiasmados con la continuidad de este tipo de actividades que involucran la participación subregional –así como también esperamos que en un futuro próximo se extiendan a toda la región latinoamericana. También, la IECLB (Iglesia Evangélica de Confesión Luterana en el Brasil) llevo a cabo un Festival Artístico, para el cual fueron invitados jóvenes de todas las iglesias vecinas. Por lo tanto, y al seguir compartiendo estas actividades de tan ricos intercambios, de seguro pronto habrá nuevas noticias. □



New Activities of the South Cone:

Camp of Mar del Plata 2000

Lucas Veira Sand is currently the South Cone coordinator. He also just started his internship at the Youth in Church and Society desk in October 2000.

Last February, a camp took place within the IELU (Evangelical Lutheran United Church) – Argentina and Uruguay – as a youth encounter of synod character. This camp had as a main theme “Love Your Neighbor As Yourself” and the objectives and methodologies, as well as the liturgical moments, were successful. There were 57 participants from the districts of Rio de la Plata, west and south of this church, as well as the youth of the churches of the south cone.

We were pleased, as also in Tandil 99 (see the last edition of Youth Magazine), to have the visit of people from neighboring churches. These persons included two young people of the ILCH (Lutheran Church in Chile), two participants of the IELCH (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile) and two persons of the IERP (Evangelical Church of Rio de la Plata – Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay). Other young people had also been invited but were not able to assist in the event. However, they did share their intention to participate in future events. The guests showed great enthusiasm and interest in the dynamics of the camp. In the future, we would like to plan for common work between the sister churches of the South Cone-Brazil. It is hoped that a communication project between the mentioned churches could be established. Indeed, this was one of the commitments of Rodeio 12 (1998) regarding the Youth Network of Latin American youth, supported by the LWF.

The chosen location was very interesting: Mar del Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. This place, in which our camp took place, is on the Atlantic coast. We thoroughly enjoyed the oceanic landscape, which is quite wonderful. The infrastructure of the place allowed for activities – studies and recreational – with optimal conditions. Many young people had the opportunity to discover the sea, as well as the city of Mar del Plata. For some of them, this was their first time to participate in a church camp.

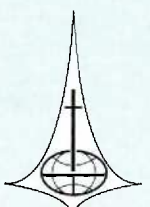
The IELU Youth Secretariat was in charge of the coordination and prepared and planned the organization of the camp. Daily meetings were held with the coordinators to discuss the different questions, which arose from the discussions. Furthermore, different positions were explored

English translation

in an attempt to find common solutions. The work was intensive and fruitful at the same time.

During the camp, six biblical texts were selected in relation to the central theme: “Love Your Neighbor As Yourself”. For a better understanding of the Bible study, we formed six groups where three groups of participants were between the ages of fourteen to sixteen years old and three groups from seventeen years and above. The study of the theme took place in the morning. Then in the afternoon, there was a plenary session in which each group expressed its reflection of the day in a dynamic form. Such examples included theatrical performances and dialogues based on what had been studied. A synthesis was made in the plenary session and the ideas were organized according to the theme. In addition, studies were contextual and possessed a solid Lutheran theological background as links were made with the themes of love, judgement, mission, and so forth. These links were done in relation to the present context which brought a lot to the Christian vision of our mission as children of God.

It is with much enthusiasm that we wish to continue this type of activities, which include sub-regional participation. In the future, we hope that this participation will be extended to the whole Latin American region. The IELCB (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brazil) held an Artistic Festival to which young people of the neighboring churches have been invited. Therefore, it is expected that the continuation of such rich exchanges will bring further news very soon. □



Lutheran Youth in Liberia

Go to Camp Again

Robert S. Gonoe is currently the Youth Director of the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

Since the civil war, youth of the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL) have not had the opportunity of attending summer camps. Until December 1999, talking about camps had only been the expression of distant memories of those who were young in pre-war times.

Since the civil war, youth of the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL) have not had the opportunity of attending summer camps. Until December 1999, talking about camps had only been the expression of distant memories of those who were young in pre-war times. So, the subject of camp had always aroused interest among the young people, but they were left in hopelessness, as their dreams were never fulfilled.

The situation for the young people was even more hopeless due to the deplorable conditions of the church's only camp site, Camp K.P. in Haindii, Bond County. The civil war did not spare the center; it left its prints of destruction on it. Moreover, the church has been unable to provide funds to facilitate such programs.

With much determination to host one such program, the LCL Youth Department requested the LWF/DMD Youth Desk to sponsor a youth camp. When information was released that LWF/DMD had approved the funds, the young people went wild with enthusiasm and anticipation for this long awaited program.

With funds available, a vigorous clean up campaign was launched at Camp K.P. The camp, which had lain in ruins for about ten years, regained a glimpse of its pre-war glamour, thus making it feasible for habitation.

News about the preparation for camp spread like a wild fire across the country. The young people responded promptly when the registration forms were distributed to the parishes. In fact, there were several parishes that appealed for increment in the number of participants per parish. Hence, in order not to disappoint the eagerness of youth to attend this camp, this request was granted. Consequently, the attendance at the camp was far above the number of persons for whom it was initially budgeted.

The Summer Camp named "Camp '99/2000", which brought together about two hundred participants, was held from December 26, 1999 – January 2, 2000 under the theme: "The Trees Shall Sprout Again" (Joel 2:25-26). The participants came from almost all parishes of the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

In order to maximize the benefit of the camp, it was arranged primarily for learning purposes. Therefore, most of the activities were focused on empowering the young people. Notwithstanding, time for leisure, sports and other exciting activities were also scheduled.

Each day at camp began with one hour of physical exercises early in the morning, followed by Bible study. Among the outstanding presenters at the camp was the staff from the Great Commission Movement (formerly Campus Crusade) who did two days of basic Christian leadership training with the campers.

Camp K.P. is beautifully located on the banks of the St. Paul's river and the campers paddled across it by canoe with great joy.

Of special excitement was the evening of December 31. Meeting the New Millennium at camp was overwhelmingly memorable. The Rev. B. Tokpa Songu, Dean of Admissions, Gbarnga School of Theology, led a special worship service. At about five minutes before the end of the year, the center went perfectly silent after the prayers. "Happy New Millennium"! was the sound that broke the silence at one minute into the 21st Century. It was a great moment for rejoicing. Earlier on, some participants were seen in tears of joy as they shared their testimonies with fellow campers.

At the close of the week long camp, the young people expressed their gratitude for having been part of such a unique occasion. They are all ready to also attend subsequent camps.

Interestingly, those who did not attend this program are all equally determined to attend any other opportunity that comes.

Thanks to the LWF/DMD Youth Desk for making our young people so happy! □



Faces of Lutheran Church in Liberia youth filled with hope after the ten-year civil war



A Reflection:

Salvadorean Pilgrimage to North America

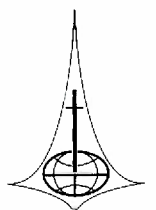
Brian Rude is Canadian, a pastor / missionary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, ordained in 1983. After serving first a rural, then an urban parish, in western Canada, he pursued a ministry in El Salvador. From 1988 until 1994, he worked directly with the Salvadorean Lutheran Synod: as chaplain of the «Fe y Esperanza» orphanage; as Christian formation teacher at the Lutheran high school; and in the Communications Department, in journalism, and in production of music, worship and educational materials.

Since 1994, Brian has worked in the area of AIDS awareness, prevention, accompaniment and solidarity. On weekends, this has been in collaboration with the Archdiocesan (Roman Catholic) AIDS Team, mostly in RC parishes and schools. His primary, weekday focus, has been in Salvadorean prisons, with the «Quetzalcoatl Foundation», an organization of which he is co-founder, and which is funded by the LWF office in San Salvador. He does AIDS chaplaincy, mostly at Rosales Public Hospital in San Salvador.

Brian has participated in, and co-led, several Lutheran and ecumenical AIDS encounters and conferences throughout the Americas, from Argentina to Canada



Luz de Luna at the THE EDGE, in front of banner depicting a map of El Salvador, and the names of those who have died of AIDS in El Salvador, accompanied by members of the Archdiocesan AIDS Team, of which Luz de Luna is a part (Marlon Flores, Francisco rodriguez, Kriseyda Fuentes, Armando Vasquez, Alex Ortiz, Daniel Rodriguez, Marina Ortiz, Sandra Menendez, Brian Rude)



If we can help the youth of today, regardless from whence they come, to meet each other and to have contact with each other, and to share with each other, then the Church of Jesus Christ will be well served.

Here is a group of "economically challenged" young people who give their time and love to those living with AIDS. In my mind, they are far wealthier than most.

What does it mean to be on "THE EDGE" as a Christian youth in Canada?

What does it mean to be on "THE EDGE" as a Christian youth in El Salvador?

In this exchange, we all became Salvadorean-Canadians, or Canadian-Salvadoreans, accompanying and guiding each other toward THE EDGE, where all are held in the loving arms of God.

An Ecumenical Partnership for a Cause

Five years ago, a group of youth living on the outskirts of San Salvador formed a drama troupe to educate their peers about AIDS prevention, through the initiative of three Maryknoll sisters in Asunción parish of Ciudad Delgado. It was formed not with the idea, or even the illusion, of carrying their message around North America. Nevertheless, from June to August, 2000, their mission and ministry expanded to incorporate this invitation, this challenge.

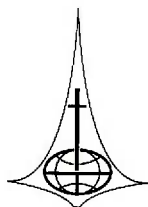
The first invitation came from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to participate

in their national youth gathering, "Dancing at the Crossroads", June 28 - July 2, in St. Louis, Missouri. This event, attended by 25,000 ELCA youth, was preceded by an orientation for 50 international guests from 25 countries, and 2 weeks of individual visits to host congregations throughout the USA. Following our three weeks with the ELCA in the USA, climaxed by "Dancing at the Crossroads," we moved on to western Canada for another six weeks of touring. Here the principal invitation was to the national youth gathering as well, this time of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), held in Regina, Saskatchewan, in mid-August. This event was called "THE EDGE".

"The PassionMime"
or the betrayal
and crucifixion of
Christ, in which
participants hand
over the name of
someone who has
died of AIDS in El
Salvador, to guard,
depicting their
crucifixion along
with Christ, and
Jesus' solidarity
with them in their
suffering and
death



Photo: Gladys Rude





Luz de Luna performing at the ELCAs 'Dancing at the Crossroads,' a work entitled 'A Visit of Reflection' (Kriseyda, Daniel, Sandra, Alex (foreground), Armando, Marlon, Sandra, Francisco (behind))

Photo: Kevin Jacobson

During the five weeks prior to "THE EDGE", Luz de Luna did drama presentations in ten congregations, at two week-long family camps, and at the national "Global Mission Event" of the ELCIC, held in Lethbridge, Alberta, and entitled, "The Many Faces of Mission."

Here are some reflections from this experience:

Witness and Advocacy

Amy Sorenson, who met the group in her home congregation, then again at a week-long family camp, and finally at "THE EDGE", had this to say about Luz de Luna's impact on her summer vacation:

"It really helped to open my eyes about issues in other countries, such as AIDS in El Salvador. The value of such a project is to bring to people's attention the serious issue that AIDS is. It's often an issue that is tossed aside because people are embarrassed to talk about it, but it is good to share it, as well as the grace of God along with the AIDS awareness."

Christina Martensson is a young Lutheran woman who works with AIDS awareness and accompaniment in Canada. Here is an excerpt from the Lutherans Concerned Canada newsletter, which Christina edits:

"I will tell you about one of the plays that Luz de Luna put on. They did the 'Betrayal of Christ', and how the guards nailed Him to the cross.

Prior to the start of this play, they gave everyone a name of someone who had died from their community at home. After "Christ" was crucified, we all stood up and walked to the cross, handed the name we were holding to a guard, who nailed it to the cross with Christ. Hold that image in your head and heart for a moment. We crucified about 70 people that evening. It was almost more than my heart could take, as I had been given the Spanish

version of my friend's name. I really didn't want to "crucify" him five years after his death—he'd been crucified enough when he was living...crucified by AIDS, by his family, by his friends, by society."

A home-team leader at "THE EDGE", Brenda Small, from Strasbourg, Canada, wrote:

"I think, in my mind, the biggest impact this would have on young people is seeing that other young people their age do believe in God and are not afraid to proclaim it or live it in any way they can."

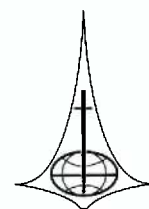
Cultural Exchange and Inspiration

Kurt Garbe, one of the coordinators of the international guest program for "Dancing at the Crossroads", also reflects on the participation of "Luz de Luna".

"The impact of Luz de Luna on me was a great one. I was truly moved by their commitment and dedication to the cause of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. I feel truly blessed to have been given the privilege to have met you and the other members of the troupe. Their drama, though simple in stage setting, is powerful and crosses all language barriers. Their power comes not so much from the words that are spoken, as from the power of their presence, acting, and commitment.

"I feel as though any participant of "Dancing at the Crossroads" who came in contact with Luz de Luna and their acting, was touched and changed. It would be impossible to not have been changed.

"The value of such a project or mission is great. If we can help the youth of today, regardless from whence they come, to meet each other and to have contact with each other, and to share with



each other, then the Church of Jesus Christ will be well served."

One international youth guest at "Dancing at the Crossroads", from Argentina, Natalia Marisol Baez, also shared her impressions (translated from Spanish):

"In my case in particular, after seeing those representations, I believed it necessary to turn them over in my community. It seemed to me to be a very easy way of conscientizing ourselves, and since I had the possibility of incorporating that knowledge, I believe it is good to share it."

Brenda Small made some further comments in this regard:

"I didn't have much opportunity to talk with all the members of the Troupe, but from what I did hear about them, was very humbled by it. Alex comes to mind. I understand that he goes to school, works and on weekends volunteers at the Aids Clinic. I think it's safe to assume that in our community, not many young people would work with people living with AIDS, let alone on a voluntary basis (not many adults would either). I'm sure Alex could have looked for another job to help pay his school expenses, but instead, works with people who have nothing, on this earth, to look forward to. I could tell by watching their presentations how very committed they are to their cause. I have always believed that material possessions are not important (even though sometimes I fall from that belief and feel sorry for myself for what I don't have). My experience with Luz de Luna has re-enforced that truth. Here is a group of "economically challenged" young people who give their time and love to those living with AIDS. In my mind, they are far wealthier than most."

Christina Martensson compared her AIDS ministry in Canada with that of Luz de Luna in El Salvador:

"It was so sad to hear how people with HIV are treated in El Salvador. If someone suspects that they might have HIV they more often than not, will not go for testing. If word got out in their community that they had HIV, they wouldn't even be able to buy groceries. "It was incredible hearing the stories of this group of youth who had left El Salvador, and hearing their hopes that they thought we could provide for them. With the three of us coming from AIDS Service Organizations, they had hoped that we could send medication to El Salvador for people living with HIV. It was shocking to hear that the life expectancy there is about three to five years for some-

one with HIV. Imagine how shocked they were when we told them that we have people here, who have lived 20 years with HIV and are still around."

Several members of Luz de Luna had the following to say about their Tour and their involvement, especially at the gathering, "THE EDGE".

Marlon Flores Rodriguez commented:

"Well, the activity of THE EDGE, seemed very good, very important, to me, and I admire the fact that they move or mobilize people and youth from different places, near and far. The fact that many youth go to it, because they really are interested in talking about the risks of youth (the many that exist), as well as resolving, and taking some risks in order to help the people who need it, and always taking into account, the mind and heart of God, Jesus, who is the one who is always with us, also created a good impression on me.

"I also hope that we have sensitized many hearts and that they join in solidarity with the persons who suffer, in all aspects, especially discrimination, poverty, HIV+, and that if it is in their hands to help that they do it for the people from their country and other countries, like El Salvador.

"I want to say thank you for the way the majority of people with whom we shared and lived while there in Canada, treated us, for materials and different things which some persons gave us."

From Sandra Menendez:

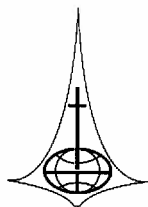
"The event THE EDGE was extraordinary, a special memory since I never lived a similar experience. Also it is something which involves the youth. They participate a lot. And thanks to the persons who invited us to this event in which we from Luz de Luna formed a part. Your collaboration was good, because without your help we wouldn't have been able to do anything."

From Marina Ortiz, the coordinator of Luz de Luna:

"Well, for me, the event with the youth in Regina was an enriching experience, full of many emotions and much learning for us Salvadoreans. It was interesting to see how the Canadian Lutheran Church motivates the youth to contribute economically in the sustainability of development projects for developing countries.

"Each day that I was in Regina was full of learning, for my individual and collective formation.

"As a Salvadorean, I hope that our visit may have left its mark on the Lutheran youth, just as





Luz de Luna with the youth group of Strasbourg, Saskatchewan, Canada

Photo: Brian Rude

we learned from this exchange, even with the great limitations of language and customs. I hope that in them might remain the seed of love and fraternity for our brothers and sisters who suffer from HIV/ AIDS.

"From El Salvador, I send a big hug of thanks to the organizers of the event for having taken us into account and for presenting out work, in this great cultural exchange."

Now I'd like to share my own reflections, based on the apt theme of "THE EDGE", which for me summarizes the type of ministry in which the youth of Luz de Luna are involved.

What does it mean to be on "THE EDGE" as a Christian youth in Canada?

What does it mean to be on "THE EDGE" as a Christian youth in El Salvador?

Is it the same? Some declare emphatically that it is. We are all compelled to live our own lives on the edge, they say, facing the challenges and crises that come our way. They are right. This is true. Barring suicide, there is no escaping life.

But it seems to me there is a difference. When one is born into a society where the violent death rate is 50 times higher than in Canada (or perhaps 100 times higher in Ciudad Delgado, Luz de Luna's home, than it is in Regina), and where, therefore, almost every daily activity involves considerable risk, especially for youth, I believe life is significantly more "edgy."

When life is, at its best, a precarious balancing act of chronic economic insecurity, if not outright poverty, with minimal social programs of health care or education, and no savings accounts or insurance policies, life is bound to be more "on the edge."

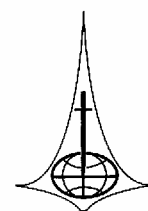
Then add to that the conscious decision to respond to a call, as a youth, to dedicate a day or two per week, for several years, as a volunteer, to a ministry of HIV/AIDS awareness, accompaniment and solidarity. Besides the internal and

relational traumas this often provokes, such a course also invites the suspicion (e.g., "there must be some reason for A to be doing this"), if not the scorn, of one's peers, even of one's family. This is definitely taking a significant step toward THE EDGE, that vast expanse where the vast majority of God's beloved creatures struggle to survive. How many Salvadorean youth have taken such a step? How many Canadian youth have taken such a step?

At least we gathered in Regina for four days to consider such an idea, such a call, and to challenge one another. That's an important and exciting step toward THE EDGE.

Some speak of the ELCIC as being a church on THE EDGE. There are some ministers (ordained and lay), some ministries, some prophets, who undoubtedly are. Regrettably, many such risk-takers have stepped outside the boundaries of the ELCIC, finding it intolerably middle-of-the-road, "status quo", risk-free. What can be done, and lauded, in a far-off "mission field", can't easily be done on an ELCIC congregation's back doorstep. THE EDGE is not familiar territory for us. It is not welcome territory for us. Those who inhabit it are strangers, even threats.

What many discovered at THE EDGE, in this Luz de Luna - Canadian exchange, was that differences of nationality, culture, language, race and church (Luz de Luna are members of the Roman Catholic Church), are really no barriers at all, when it comes to friendship, faith and celebration. Unfortunately, for the first time in many youth gatherings, there were no Canadian Salvadorean youth present at THE EDGE (except for Francisco Rodriguez, accompanying Luz de Luna for their summer tour in AB and SK). But in this exchange, we all became Salvadorean-Canadians, or Canadian-Salvadoreans, accompanying and guiding each other toward THE EDGE, where all are held in the loving arms of God. □



Youth at the 2000 LWF Council Meeting, Turko Finland

The youth, after confirmation, have lost their place in the church. They long to belong but distance themselves from the church if they do not feel needed.

We, the young people want to belong to a shared hope that is not only connected to the past but is also relevant today continually renewing our life together.

Paul Kamau of Kenya and Brigitte Jeppesen of Denmark at the Pre Council Workshop in Karjaa, Finland





The stewards at the Council meeting site in Turku, Finland

Message from the Youth Pre-Council Workshop 2000

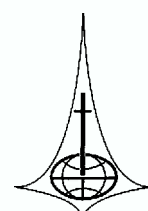
In Pohja, Finland, twenty one participants including thirteen stewards from Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, three youth council members from Central African Republic, Denmark, and Kenya, three staff from the Lutheran World Federation and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, and two international ecumenical guests from Botswana (Reformed Churches) and South Africa (Anglican Church) gathered on June 10-12, 2000.

Centered on the theme **Future Hopes: Searching with Hope**, presentations were made by Rev. Dr. Risto Cantell, Mr. Tero Rantanen and Rev. Dr. Päivi Jussila. Regional perspectives from the Lutheran Communion of Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA) and Central Western Europe were received and discussed. These contributions and Dr. Paul Otto Brunstad's survey on the longing, dreams, fears and hopes about the future of Norwegian secondary school students, led to an honest reflection about churches' challenges concerning young people.¹

Most of the participants acknowledged that Nordic countries are deeply secularized and this affects the life of the whole church. Even though ecclesiastical structures still exist in societies, the meaning of the church has been reduced to its rites and rituals, that is, baptism, confirmation, marriage and funeral. With this reality, the youth, after confirmation, have lost their place in the church. They long to belong but distance themselves from the church if they do not feel needed. They do not understand the nature of the church because they do not find their way to the sacramental life. The way the church communicates the essence of faith does not reflect the experience of the youth.

The church is the body of Christ. There are different parts and all are essential and interdependent, but they need to be more visibly and actively connected. In order to realize the holistic nature of the church, young people must be included and accepted as full members of the church. What unites us is the sacramental community. The church must identify with the hopes and worries of the youth and address them. We need a "walking" church that goes out, meets and shares personal faith. Congregations should take an

¹ Lutheran World Federation Youth Magazine/February 2000, pp.4-5 "Longing for Belonging, the Language of the Future".





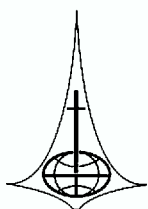
LWF Council
members from
Denmark and
Central African
Republic

active role in encouraging the youth to take part in the congregational life, in common worship and in administration. We encourage member churches to listen carefully to the concerns and new visions of the youth so that the church can enter to honest dialogue with and be enriched by the competence and gifts of the young people.

All churches can learn from each other. From a regional perspective we heard that the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church incorporates the youth in every aspect of its mission. As a result KELC is now experiencing spiritual growth with the youth being a moving force. In order to assist in realizing the vision of a holistic and healthy church body, we therefore, encourage the Lutheran World Federation-Department for Mission and Development to initiate exchange programs between continents, including people of all levels and ages, to address specifically this great concern.

We, the young people want to belong to a shared hope that is not only connected to the past but is also relevant today continually renewing our life together. We challenge the church with our new visions and commitment. □

Kristin (far left) at
the Pre-Council
Workshop



The 2000 LWF Council Meeting:

Enriched by coming together: A Steward's Reflection

Kristin Tomasdottir, is a young pastor from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland.

The following are some reflections about my experience as a steward at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council Meeting in Turku, Finland, last June. The reason I applied to my home church to become a representative of the Icelandic youth at the council meeting, was that one year earlier, I had participated in The European Lutheran Youth Consultation in Strasbourg, France. There, I got a little insight into Department for Mission and Development's work for young people in LWF member churches. So I was determined to use this opportunity, to work as a steward on this year's council meeting in Turku, in order to familiarize myself with the structure and policy making of LWF. And, of course, to meet a lot of interesting people, from Geneva, the rest of the world, and to try the Finnish Sauna.

Apart from the Sauna, and the whole social surroundings, which were pleasant indeed, I think my experience from the council meeting falls into two categories. First, as a steward, I got a fair chance to learn how things are conducted in the LWF Mothership – the headquarters in Geneva. Many of the Geneva staff were there to make things in the council meeting run smoothly and those were, during the meeting, also the mentors of the stewards. Before the meeting started, we received some briefings regarding the structures and desks of the LWF. I think that helped a lot – it's always nice to know who you are working for.

Now, it goes without saying, that the tasks of the stewards are not equally interesting. But most of the time, we had our chances to listen in on plenary sessions and committee work, or simply socialize with the many delegates that were present in Turku. And getting to know this diverse and dynamic group of delegates and visitors and advisers, is what falls into my second category as the most memorable experience as a steward. I think it was truly an enriching experience to stay with, work with, worship with and play with people from all over the world, learning from what they had to say about life and our faith. As a young Scandinavian theologian I tried whenever possible, to hang out with peers from other regions, talk and share experience of living as a young Lutheran today. This personal encounter is what I will value the most from Turku when time goes by.

In one arena of the council meeting, the committees, it became clear to me how the input of both the council members and the staff is being used to form the agenda and the policies of the LWF. The committee I was assigned to work with as a steward, namely the Program Committee for Mission and Development, had on its agenda various matters. The agenda touched on both the necessary bureaucracy as well as some very interesting subjects such as Lutheran identity and what is being done to help member churches dealing with violence against women.

One cannot write about one's experience as a steward without mentioning the work being done by the desk for Youth in Church and Society (YICAS). YICAS and the local office in Finland organized a pre-council workshop for both the stewards working at the meeting and the attending youth council members. The pre-council workshop was intended to brief us on what matters the council meeting was going to discuss, as well as to give us insight into the work and structure of the organization. It was successful in bringing the stewards together before the big meeting, feeding them important knowledge and creating a good sense of *koinonia*. It was obvious though, that the youth delegates from the member churches, did not interest themselves in taking part in this workshop, since most of them did not attend. A part of the pre-council workshop was for the participants to agree on a message from the youth, to the LWF Council. Composing this message, that was intended to convey some of the visions and worries of young Lutherans today, was not the easiest thing any of us had ever done. Never have I experienced such engaged and committed thinkers in one room, trying to agree on how to put our primary concerns in the youth message! But we were quite successful in the end, and the message was read for the DMD committee at the council meeting itself.

So, in order to evaluate my experience as a steward on the LWF Council Meeting in Turku, I think I can say that it was an enriching experience. I got to know a little bit about how an organization like LWF functions and what is being done to work on common goals and visions of Lutheran churches everywhere. I got to know people from all around and share with them experience and visions for being a Lutheran in the 21st century. Thanks to all of you, who made it possible for me to attend the council meeting in Turku as a steward, and to all of my new friends for being there! □



The 2000 LWF Council Meeting:

Celebrating a Year of Hope in Finland

Kati Harviainen is a journalist with the ELCF Communications Center

"We shall seek together new ways for peace, justice and reconciliation within church and society." Dr. Ishmael Noko

TURKU, Finland/GENEVA, 22 June 2000 (LWI) – Christian churches are marking the Gregorian calendar year 2000 as a Jubilee Year. The main objective of the millennium celebrations is to demonstrate the fact that what the churches celebrate in common is the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, which marks the beginning of the Christian era.

In Finland, Christian churches are celebrating the threshold of the new millennium jointly under the theme "Millennium 2000 - Year of Hope". Events to mark the year began on Advent Sunday 1999 and will end at Easter 2001 when both the Western and Eastern churches celebrate Easter on the same day, April 15. An ecumenical planning committee, chaired by the archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), serves as the highest decision-making

body for the millennium preparations. The ELCF has appointed its own team to coordinate the various projects.

According to the general secretary of the millennium committee of the ELCF, Ms. Anneli Janhonen, there are two main themes that the churches want to emphasize—celebration and hope. "We really want to celebrate the jubilee and millennium year as one can imagine the celebration of a 2000th anniversary," she told this writer.

Janhonen, continued: "The jubilee is marked by masses in congregations, through art exhibitions and in many other ways. The way it is celebrated can be seen even in its emblem." Finland's jubilee year logo depicts a human figure playing a long trumpet pointing skywards.

The main celebration of the year took place in Turku from 17 to 18 June 2000. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) had its Council meeting there at the same time therefore participants were able to take part in the jubilee festivities during that weekend. A significant event took place in front of the Turku Cathedral. Young people constructed before the eyes of the spectators a colorful so-called "Ship of Hope" by means of song, lively music, dance and prayer. The performance symbolized the whole ecumenical church of Christ as a ship in which all Christians are passengers.

All the ecumenical celebration, "Ship of Hope", various church leaders pronounced blessings on participants





Addressing the more than three thousand people at the gathering, the LWF general secretary, Dr. Ishmael Noko said that being together in the "Ship of Hope" and heading for a destination that none of those on board can fully and concretely describe fills the passengers with anxiety. He pointed out that it is an experience that forces the people to be interdependent while at the same time providing them with opportunities to care for one another, and receive as gifts the insights and contributions of those for whom they may not have had regard. Noko told the spectators who included representatives of various Christian churches that as the body of Christ, "we shall seek together new ways for peace, justice and reconciliation within church and society."

The second theme of the Jubilee Year 2000 is hope. "The organizers wanted to make real commitments through concrete decisions in churches. The aim was to pay attention to people, for whom hope is just an empty word," said Janhonen who is a former director and editor-in-chief of the LWF Office for Communication Services.

Hope mediated locally in Finland and internationally

In order to mediate hope to the less fortunate in life, the ELCF church synod decided to give FIM 10 million (USD 1.6 million) towards projects to help young people to have a better grip on life. Last May about one-third of this amount was shared out among 20 projects throughout Finland. Going by the number of applications—101—submitted for the "Jubilee money", it is clear that there is urgency for work to be done among young people locally. The remainder from the FIM 10 million will be distributed in the course of this year.

The money disbursed went to support youth work in local congregations. Most of the projects concentrate particularly on people facing severe

difficulties in their lives such as alcoholism, mental and family problems, dropping out of school and attempted suicides.

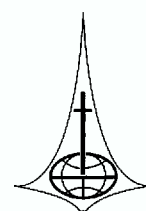
If the "Jubilee money" will bring hope locally in Finland, the same objective is intended internationally. [P-2 - "Ship of Hope", millennium 2000 celebrations in Turku to raise funds to support youth work in local congregations] The Bishops' Conference made a recommendation to the congregations that they give one per cent of their annual budgets toward mission and development work. This could realize up to FIM 40 million (USD 6.4 million) according to Janhonen.

Home delivery for new revised edition of the Catechism

One of the main projects of the Jubilee Year 2000 in the ELCF has been the revision of the Catechism. A new version now includes both Martin Luther's texts and "up-to-date" explanations written by the bishop of Helsinki, Eero Huovinen and already accepted by the Bishops' Conference. Huovinen is a member of the LWF Council.

The new edition of the Catechism is also a special project because the Church Synod has decided to have a copy of it delivered to all Finnish homes where it is estimated that at least one member of the Lutheran church lives. This would add up to around two million homes. In any case, some of the congregations have decided to deliver the Catechism to all homes irrespective of whether or not there are any ELCF members there. Around 86 per cent of Finns are Lutherans.

The distribution of the Catechism will begin on 17 September 2000. Some of the congregations plan to have volunteers deliver the books personally from door to door, others will send them by post. Altogether 2.5 million copies of the Catechism have been printed of which around 150,000 are in Swedish. □



Introducing...

The Decade to Overcome Violence

Deenabandhu Manchala is the World Council of Churches Executive Secretary for Peace Concerns.

The Decade to Overcome Violence is not a programme of the WCC, but its call and invitation to work together for peace. It is an expression of readiness of the churches to work with others to overcome violence and to build a culture of peace.

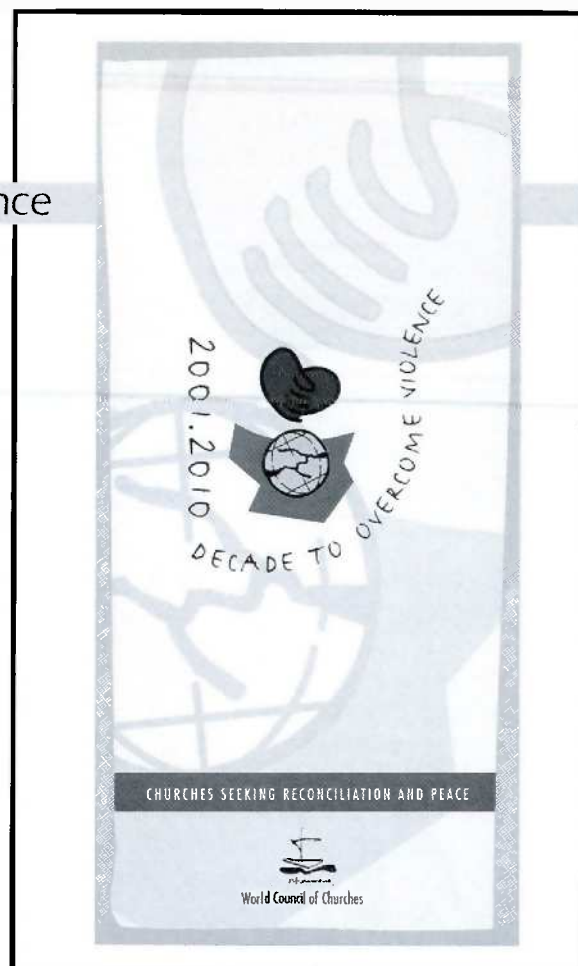
The Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) is going to be launched in Berlin on February 4, 2001. The launch includes a worship service at Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtnis Kirche and a public event at the Berlin House of World Cultures. On the previous day, the members of the Central Committee of the WCC will deliberate upon the DOV process at a special plenary and Padares (workshops). The idea of the Decade ever since it took origin at the VIII Assembly of the WCC in Harare in December in 1998, has generated a great deal of interest among churches, organizations, and movements. A number of regional and national launches are being planned to take place from January, 2001. (Please visit the DOV website for the latest updates) The DOV is being seen as a new ecumenical rallying point as churches seek unity in partnership with one another and with all, including people of other faiths, who are challenged to make a difference in world pervaded by the culture of violence.

The DOV is not a programme of the WCC, but its call and invitation to work together for peace. It is an expression of readiness of the churches to work with others to overcome violence and to build a culture of peace. As such the DOV is expected to grow out of the sensitivity, creativity and commitment of the churches, concerned organizations, and individuals, in different parts of the world. The WCC restrains itself from prescribing what needs to be done. It commits itself to the task of making visible those initiatives of people, movements and churches to overcome violence so that these can inspire others to promote a culture of peace.

However, while promoting the DOV, the WCC lays emphasis on three major elements:

1. **Overcoming.** DOV is expected to highlight and inspire acts of overcoming violence.

2. **Causes of violence.** DOV holds that a genuine way of overcoming violence is by dealing with the causes of violence which are created and perpetuated by political, economic, cultural and social structures.



3. **Churches seeking peace.** The DOV is an attempt by the churches. It is their commitment to be on a pilgrimage of peace in a broken world. As such, the DOV is expected to lead the churches through a process of self-discovery. The DOV points towards the challenge of dealing with the spirit, logic and practice of violence in creative ways.

In this process, the WCC initiates and encourages:

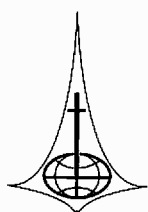
1. Studies on the structures and cultures of violence in an effort to expose the causes of violence. These include: racism, sexism, xenophobia, casteism, ethnic and linguistic chauvinism, economic and political structures and policies, etc.

2. Campaigns and movements

3. Production of peace education material in an effort to provide alternative value education in an environment where people are taught violence and are getting immune to it.

4. Innovative theological and liturgical initiatives to assist the churches become communities of peace.

5. Sharing of stories and experiences of overcoming violence through the web, publications, etc. □



LWF Interns

The UN Human Rights Commission, May 2000

Ilvija Stolina is a member of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia and works for the consistory in Riga.

With the kind support of the Lutheran World Federation and the Conference of European Churches (as an intern of LWF/CEC), I had the opportunity to attend the 56th UN Human Rights Commission session in Geneva in May 2000. I would like to express my deep gratitude for having had this possibility.

The attendance at the UN Human Rights Commission made a very strong impression on me. It was the first time that I had an opportunity to learn about worldwide human rights problems. I can even say that it opened my eyes to broader perspectives in all fields of life.

The first week, I attended a seminar held by the International Human Rights Service where I was introduced to the United Nations mechanisms and structure. It was really useful to get to know the function of all bodies and their responsibilities before attending the commission itself.

During the commission, I decided to focus on two issues: religious intolerance and minorities. I found both issues really interesting. Since my everyday life is connected with religion, I wanted to learn something more about intolerance and human rights violations. Furthermore, the treatment of minorities was an issue last year during a seminar held in Romania. It was also the only issue when the name of my country, Latvia, was mentioned.

Violations directed towards minorities were addressed to many Special Rapporteurs (SR). There are continuing reports on extra judicial, summary or arbitrary executions, on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Iraq, the rights of the Kurdish minorities who have been continuously violated in Turkey, and so forth. In written reports, we read about violations in Somalia, where several minority groups are the main victims of famine and the civil war. However, in the midst of such reports concerning abuses of minorities, there were a group of states who made strong statements saying that they take great care of minorities, especially religious minorities in their respective countries.

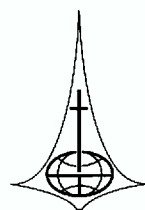
Another group of individuals spoke about the problems of the Roma people in Central and Eastern Europe. Many countries expressed great concern about the situation of Roma minorities in several countries.

Written statements from two Non-Governmental Organizations namely, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence and the CURE/AFRE, expressed concern about human rights violation towards Africans in the USA. According to Human Rights Watch, minorities in fourteen US states are continuously being subjected to police aggression, and their social and political rights are disregarded. I was also deeply touched by the human rights violations in India (Dalits), in Columbia (military activities) and in Africa (extreme poverty, AIDS).

Another highlight during the commission was the issue of Chechnya and Ms. Robinson's visit to Russia.

Many working groups (WG) underlined the need for the implementation of minority rights which seek to ensure equality between all individuals and minorities in society, to contribute to the enjoyment of all human rights by all members in society, and to guarantee access to resources on a basis of equality.

There were several conclusions reached during the current session: Many working groups (WG) underlined the need for the implementation of minority rights which seek to ensure equality between all individuals and minorities in society, to contribute to the enjoyment of all human rights by all members in society, and to guarantee access to resources on a basis of equality. Furthermore, as recommendations, the WG highlighted the following points. First, effective participation can provide channels for consultation be-



LWF Interns

The UN Human Rights Commission (continued)

tween and among minorities and governments. Second, it was felt that minorities should be involved at the local, national and international levels in the formulation, adoption, implementation and monitoring of standards and policies affecting them. Third, effective participation requires representation in legislative, administrative and advisory bodies and, more generally, in public life. There should be equal access to public sector employment across the various ethnic, linguistic and religious communities, public institutions should not be based on the basis of ethnic or religious criteria. It was noted that citizenship remains an important condition for full and effective participation.

Of course, I had great expectations at the beginning of the commission work. I thought that the commission could immediately

solve problems in any country. But, in reality, the commission does not have decision-making rights.

Now, as I am back in Latvia, I have planned several activities in connection with human rights. Besides reporting to the Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, I have planned three types of activities, which includes holding lectures about Human Rights in all fourteen deaneries for the congregational staff. It is my intention that this program will reach 1400 persons during a three-year period. Also, introductory lectures during pastoral retreats can also serve to further educate communities about the reality of human rights violations worldwide. Last, it is hoped that further connection and cooperation with Human Rights organizations in Latvia be established. □

From Brazil to Ethiopia: November 1999- February 2000

Katia Marzall, agronomist

It is often difficult to realize that the person who lives next door, or in the next city, or in the next country, may think and feel differently. This is, however, maybe the way it has to be. But then could it not be that the way he or she does or believes is better than ours? So, what am I doing, when I think that my way of understanding development is the right one? That the God in whom I believe is the right one?

For a period of four months, I participated in a rural development program in Hossaina, 250 km south of Addis Ababa. This experience was possible thanks to the Internship Program of the Youth Desk of the Lutheran World Federation, Department for Mission and Development.

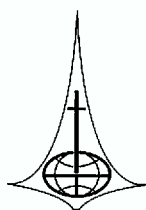
The first image people usually have of Ethiopia is the one where you see a mother with some children starving. Mostly during this period of the year (November until July), which means the dry season, farmers have no harvest to feed their family. With this image, but also with the thought that the country should be more than just that stereotype, I left Brazil for the unknown.

Of course, it was often difficult, because

of the different culture, a different language, always feeling as a foreigner ("yo!!! *Ferenji*" = you!!! Stranger). But being far from the own culture may also be positive. Being aware exactly of those differences can help you discover little wonders, which make you, think, and discover some new details of life.

My activities were related to the project staff, assisting the coordination team with the organization of their work with the farmers. I wanted to leave something positive in the short period I would spend there. The really important moments, however, were those when I was with someone, listening, speaking, sharing a moment, just being there, living and feeling that life is something that exists in each little corner of this immense and so heterogeneous world. I hope that I could help, if not the country, if not the region, perhaps someone during my short stay there. I gained and brought back feelings, thoughts, and the precious memory of some friends who remained in Ethiopia.

Precious moments where those where I was visiting farmers in the inland, and was invited to share some coffee (the origin



of the coffee plant is Ethiopia) or a meal, inside their roundhouses. Realizing that sometimes it was a real honor to share some very, very special foods, like the "Mermeri" – a sweet that is prepared only on special occasions (perhaps once or twice a year).

Precious moments where those when we traveled to participate in a church service somewhere far away in the countryside, and waited until the church was more or less full to start, even if we had to wait one or two hours. In those moments, I thought how dependent I was on timing, always running to keep up with many different things. Following a schedule, thinking always about what to do next, not realizing that the present is slipping away. Sometimes it is very difficult to live in the present, but it is important to remember that this is the only real time we have.

Precious moments where those sitting outside the house where I was living, at night, looking at the sky, far, far away from the lights of a city. What a wonderful sky they have there!

Strange feelings where those, looking at that sky at night, or after lunch, on my favorite place under a mimosa tree, that was just flourishing. Looking at the sky, at the sun... The same sun that I can see in Brazil. The same sun that you are seeing from your place. So, so far away from my home, living in a different reality. Seeing people

who had a different way of living, a different way of understanding life.

My concluding thoughts are not related specifically to Ethiopia, but do concern the entire world. I started to think about it there in Ethiopia, while I was living and seeing the reality of the people from someplace in the "highlands". People, who do not know exactly what a ship is, even less the Titanic, but have a Leonardo DiCaprio sticker glued to the notebook.

It is often difficult to realize that the person who lives next door, or in the next city, or in the next country, may think and feel differently. This is, however, maybe the way it has to be. But then could it not be that the way he or she does or believes is better than ours? So, what am I doing, when I think that my way of understanding development is the right one? That the God in whom I believe is the right one?

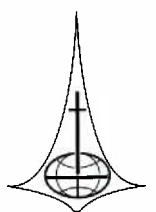
To participate in a development program involving an intercultural experience is a big challenge. It is very important to understand how far you are helping, but without imposing your own perception of the "right" thing to do, even sharing it. It is sometimes far more important to be open to learn, rather than to teach.

This is true also in our own place, where we have perhaps even more to do.

Katia Marzall, is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brazil. □



Katia with Ethiopian women whom she refers to as the "Strong Ladies"



LWF Interns

Compartiendo desafíos

Lucas Veira Sand

Desde el 3 de octubre pasado tengo la alegría de integrar la Oficina de Juventud como interno, así como también la novedad de estar en un lugar muy distinto a aquel del cual provengo. He participado en las actividades de la iglesia local en la Argentina (IELU) desde muy pequeño, y he entrado en contacto con la FLM en los últimos años debido a la actividad juvenil que luego involucró a la Red Juvenil Latinoamericana. Esta última se estableció a partir del último Congreso Luterano Latinoamericano de Rodeio 12, Brasil.

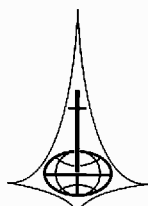
Es realmente muy alentador compartir expectativas y visiones que nos convocan tanto como agentes de cambio en nuestras realidades, así como también a devenir defensores y responsables del cuidado de la creación de Dios que también integramos. Comparto con gran entusiasmo varios intereses. Uno de ellos lo constituye aquel referente al género, que aunque se repita no pierde vigencia alguna; es vital el compromiso en la construcción activa de una comunidad de semejantes, para lo cual es necesario buscar la sensibilidad en este asunto. Desconstruir prácticas y formas que involucran un rol prescrito y pasivo para la mujer en primera instancia (es pertinente recordar que la forma relativa al género fue el primer modo de segregación) es un desafío apasionante y difícil a la vez, ya que debemos ser cuidadosos de no utilizar los mismos conceptos y formas que utilizan los discursos que acentúan las desigualdades, recordando que no se trata de una asunto de mujeres contra hombres o viceversa, sino de interrogar a las cuestiones de género en sí mismas en pos de fortalecer la comunión.

El tópico referente a los Derechos Humanos, convoca de similar manera. Aún hoy nos enterarnos sobre conflictos armados, y que en determinadas ocasiones hay "excesos". Podríamos preguntarnos si atentar contra la vida de otros sujetos y pares –sea en el sentido biológico o en el

de proyecto de vida– no es acaso algo más que un "exceso", constituyendo como fuere una violación a estos derechos y una amenaza constante para la creación de Dios. Es por ello que no necesitamos esperar a este tipo de manifestaciones para pensar en DD.HH.; ya en innumerables situaciones asistimos a injusticias de tipo social, económico, etc., un modo más sutil de ejercicio de violencia que también atañen a aquellos. Recuerdo que una vez, de pequeño, leí en un panfleto sirio la leyenda "La justicia es la base de la paz"; bien, sé que esta no es una muletilla propia y exclusivamente siria (es más bien occidental), pero aún hoy sigo reflexionando sobre ella.

Estos son tópicos que siempre devienen relevantes. Desde el Youth Desk, hay temas donde estaré involucrado. En los meses siguientes, emprenderé el inicio de un estudio sobre la expresión de fe en los jóvenes hoy en día, teniendo como referentes también a los distintos eventos que se llevarán a cabo durante mi estadía en Ginebra de alrededor de diez meses, así como los distintos contextos, culturas y preocupaciones. Sé que será un tiempo fructífero, y ya he venido conociendo gente solidaria y un lugar que me dio una amable bienvenida. □

Consejo Latino
Americano de
Iglesias, January
2001



English translation

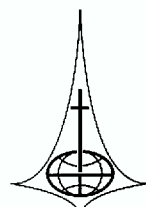
I am very happy to be an intern at the Youth Desk where I started my activities on October 3. It is also new for me to live in a different place than my home country. I have been participating in the activities of the United Evangelical Church (Argentina) since my childhood and I have been in touch with the LWF for the last few years through the Latin American Regional Network for Youth. The latter was established at the last Latin American Lutheran Youth Consultation in Rodeio 12, Brazil.

It is actually very encouraging to share experiences and visions which call for the church's attention as agents for change in our realities and to become defenders and people responsible for God's creation of which we are part. I am eagerly interested in many issues. One of them refers to gender. It may be a repetitive issue but it is still an essential matter. A commitment to build a sharing community is vital, and because of that it is necessary to seek sensibility on this issue. Before anything else we put into deconstruction practices which prescribe

a passive role for women (it would be good to remind ourselves that the first segregation was related to gender); this becomes both an amazing and hard challenge. We have to be careful in not using the same concepts and tools in our discourse as those which enhance inequalities. We have to keep in mind that it is not "women against men" or vice-versa matter, but rather a question of the gender issues in themselves to strengthen the communion.

Human rights issues are quite prevalent, too. Even today we still hear about armed conflicts and in certain cases we often receive information about excess use of force. Well, any attempt against human life – whether it be in the biological sense or as life project – means much more than an "excess", as it is a violation of these rights and a constant threat to God's creation. Therefore we should not wait for such manifestations to start thinking about human rights. Many times we might know about social and/or economic injustices (among others) which we could see as a more discreet way to apply violence but pertain all the same to this issue. I remember that once, still being a child, I read in a Syrian pamphlet that "Justice is the basis of peace". Although I know that it is not an exclusive and original Syrian idea as it is rather assumed as a western thinking. I still continue to reflect on it.

All these topics will always be relevant. From the Youth Desk there are also another themes in which I will be involved. In the coming months I will initiate a study about faith expressions by the youth today, also based on events which I will attend during my ten-month stay in Geneva, as well as on different contexts, cultures and concerns. I know it will be a fruitful time for me, and I have already met kind people and a place that gave me a warm welcome. □



LWF Youth Desk Staff

Dear friends,

Everything comes to an end as the saying goes. Now my time at the Youth Desk has come to an end. When you receive this issue of Youth magazine I am no longer working at the Lutheran World Federation. As some of you know, I have now been working at the Youth Desk for nearly twenty years and I think the time has come for someone else to take over.

During these years I have had the privilege of working together with five secretaries for Youth in Church and Society. I am very grateful to them all for the wonderful times we had together. We often had too much work to do, sometimes we had problems and frustrations to deal with, but we also had a lot of fun and enjoyed very much working together.



Further, I have introduced about 15 youth interns to their work at the LWF headquarters in Geneva and accompanied them during their stay here. I have assisted with the production of about 35 issues of Youth magazine (formerly called first Youth Newsletter and later Youth Letter); prepared and made the layout for countless reports from youth conferences and workshops; also prepared for and participated in many of these events, e.g. in Malaysia, the Slovak Republic, Latvia, Argentina, Kenya, Philippines, Thailand, Namibia, France as well as several here in Switzerland. One especially memorable program, which was a joint program of the whole Department for Mission and Development, was the three-year LWF Leadership Training Program for Younger Women 1994-96. For three years I served this program as assistant to the DMD core group responsible for the content and planning of the program. During these years, I maintained communication to and from all 50 participants and most of them become my special friends.

But above all, during these nearly 20 years, I have met innumerable young people, among those many of you who receive this magazine. In addition to all of you whom I have met in one or another of our conferences, workshops or as interns here at the LWF headquarters; I have been corresponding with many, many more.

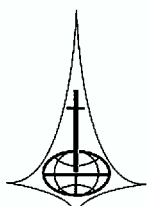
For me, one of the most precious memories of these twenty years, is meeting and getting to know so many nice and talented young people all over the world and having the privilege of sharing and working for and together with you. These encounters have enriched my life and I will always continue to carry with me the memory of each one of you.

After having given so many years of my life to the LWF and the youth ministry of our member churches, I feel that I have now earned some rest and time to do other things that are also important in life.

As a farewell, I would like to remind you of the following words from the Bible:
“...I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” (Jer. 1:6-8)

With these words, I wish you all the best as you carry on with your life and ministry, not being afraid to speak because you are too young.

Birgitta
Birgitta Voltenauer



Indonesia

Rising from the crisis



The Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP), Asia's largest LWF member church with 2.9 million members, held their youth conference after ten years. They gathered focusing on the theme "Young Man, I say Unto Thee, Arise! Overcome Evil with Good." Around 400 young people met from August 14-21, 2000 in Sidakalang, Dairi in the island of North Sumatra, Indonesia. In spite of the political and religious crisis that have been trying to paralyze the Indonesian people, the young people would like to learn from the past and renew their commitment and vision as Christians in a predominantly Muslim country. They elected the youth organization's Chairperson, Paul M. Simanjuntak, and General Secretary, Halomoan Batubara, as well as leaders in the Central Committee. Furthermore, they drafted and ratified new structure and youth programs with the hope that all decisions from this conference will be ratified for implementation at the next HKBP Conference. They also urged youth from all over the world to continue to pray for them, the HKBP community and Indonesia, as they continually face socio-political and religious conflict.

cate that the young people of the LCL are in total support of the global advocacy for gender equality. The election which was held from March 3-7, 2000 in Yekepa, Nimba County marked the first time since its birth in 1987, that the NLYF elected a female in the person of Sister Agatha Kennedy to the post of president. Ms. Kennedy and the other elected officials were installed into office on March 7, by the LCL bishop, Dr. Sumoward E. Harris. Among issues discussed at this convention was the age limit of the LCL youth. A decision was made to uphold the LCL's Constitution that the youth age for the Lutheran Church in Liberia be restricted to the age range thirteen to thirty. During districts' assemblies this year, officers above 30 years of age are expected to step down and make way for younger persons. However, the Youth Department will call on those leaving to serve as resource persons and advisors to the youth activities whenever needed.

The Huria Kristin Batak Protestan (HKBP) Youth conference's opening worship.

Madagascar

Youth for Peace



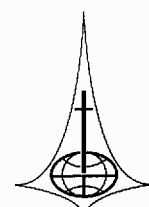
A youth choir from one of the seventeen regional youth departments.

More than two thousand youth participated at the Malagasy Lutheran Church's camp from August 7 to 13, 2000 in Mahajanga, Madagascar. The youth talked about the challenges they face in the 21st century and the importance of the gospel and self-reliance of the church. Workshops were also held on Sunday School Teaching methods, how to fight drug abuse, music and its place in the church and HIV/AIDS Awareness. Mr. Paul Kamau of Kenya was also invited to discuss about the strengthening of African youth networking through its three sub regions (see story African Youth Networking: Moving into Action).

Liberia (LYF news)

First Female Youth President for Liberian Church Youth

Election results from the Annual Convention of the National Lutheran Youth Fellowship (NLYF) of the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL), indi-



News in brief News in brief

Nigeria/Cameroon (by Obot Ekong Ufford, Nigeria)

Africa Youth Exchange on the go

An exchange visit took place between the youth of the National Youth Fellowship of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria and the youth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon. On January 10, 2000, six young adults from Nigeria left Uyo and arrived in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon. There were varied reasons for the visit. One purpose of the exchange was to encourage young people in sharing their faith in Jesus Christ. Such events further a sense of unity between Christians of different nations and cultures. In addition, this exchange sought to establish good working relationships between the youth of these two countries. Among other tasks, the program also included visits to church farm projects, a leprosy center, hospitals and various congregations, as well as Bible studies, worship, songs and drama. The youth from Nigeria returned on January 17 strengthened and encouraged by this exchange.

Philippines

Ready to Face the Challenges Together (by Meg Banes)

Tasked to spearhead the Philippine National Youth Organization, a steering committee composed of two youth representatives from the recognized districts of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP) met on August 25-27, 2000 in La Trinidad, Benguet, north of the Philippines. They reassessed, formulated and drafted vision, goals and structure, fund raising strategies and other related activities in conjunction with the national youth consultation slated in the summer of 2002. Other leaders present at the meeting were the LCP President, Rev. Benjamin Lasegan and the Lutheran World Federation Secretary for Youth in Church and Society, Rev. Teresita C. Valeriano.

Switzerland

Youth Liaisons Designated

In an effort to implement the 1999 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council resolution, member churches have designated their respective youth liaison. The Youth in Church and Society (YICAS) desk looks forward to improved communication between member churches as the liaisons seek to facilitate communication between YICAS and member churches and in establishing and strengthening youth networks in their respective regions. Among other things,

the youth liaison will also assist in identification of youth representatives to attend LWF-sponsored events and will represent YICAS in regional and national events, among other things.

The youth desk hopes that this function will encourage greater youth representation and participation in church leadership. Liaisons will serve for a three-year term.

USA – United Nations

Twelve Critical Areas of Concern Named

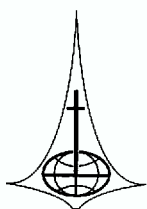
Beijing + 5, from June 5-9, 2000 in New York. This was a follow-up on the 4th Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995. The purpose of this session was to review and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi meeting in 1985 and the Beijing meeting in 1995. It also served as an opportunity to consider future actions and initiatives for the year 2000 and beyond. There were twelve critical areas of concern for women's advancement and empowerment that needed review and appraisal, namely (1) poverty, (2) education and training, (3) health, (4) violence, (5) armed conflict, (6) economy, (7) decision-making, (8) institutional mechanisms, (9) human rights, (10) media, (11) environment, and (12) the girl-child.

USA

39,000 Youth Danced on the Crossroads

June 28 – July 2 and July 5-9 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) hosted its triennial Youth Gathering in St. Louis, Missouri. Some 22,000 participants were in attendance during the first week and around 17,000 during the second week. Youth and young adults came from all fifty states, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands and 25 countries from around the world. The theme for this gathering was "Dancing at the Crossroads."

On June 25-28, before the gathering, there were two events held at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. These events were the Multi-Cultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) and the Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event (DAYLE). In between the two gatherings on July 2-5, the Lutheran Youth Organization Convention was held at the same site as noted above. You can visit their site at www.elca.org for further information. □



Upcoming events

2001

2000/2001 National Gathering of the Lutheran Student Movement, USA, will take place in New Orleans. At this gathering a new Bible study series will be introduced.

January 10-19

Vision Beyond 2000 Event in Latin America was postponed from October 2000 to January 2001. It will be attached to the Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias Assembly. This is the final regional event before the global event in Jerusalem in June. Vision Beyond 2000 aims to celebrate the birth of Christ and the Jubilee year, to learn from the ecumenical movement and to seek peace, justice and reconciliation through prayer, advocacy, dialogue and solidarity.

June 8-10

Youth Pre-Council Workshop in Jerusalem. This is an annual event organized by the LWF Youth Desk prior to the LWF Council Meeting. Participants are the Council members representing youth and the stewards for the Council meeting.

June

Global Event of "Vision Beyond 2000" – an International Pilgrimage. This event is organized by the LWF Youth Desk and is the culmination of the program "Vision Beyond 2000" under which events in all LWF regions were organized to celebrate the new millennium. The International Pilgrimage will take place in Jerusalem and neighboring cities and towns pertinent in the life and ministry of Christ, and bring together 50 young people from all over the world.

August 2-6

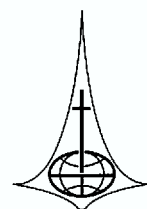
"Connections" is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada's Young Adult event. It will be held in Edmonton, Alberta at the Grey Nuns Retreat Center. Its theme verse is "All belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God" from 1 Corinthians 3:22b and 23. The theme will be explored through worship, bible study, servant event opportunities, workshops among others.

September

The LWF International Youth Program participants will gather for a five-day orientation meeting to start this three-year program. Thirty-five young people from all over the world will be chosen to participate. Application forms have been sent to member churches.



Youth from
El Salvador





Pen-pals

I am a young man 20 years of age and would like to have pen-pals from any part of the world. My hobbies are: playing football, table tennis, singing and listening to gospel music, exchanging photos and gifts.

Mr. Matthias NEKSUMMI
Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
c/o Rev. Matthias S. Hammadu
P.O. Box 21
Numan,
Adamawa State, Nigeria



LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION
DEPARTMENT OF WORLD SERVICE
P.O. BOX 1133, MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

I am interested in having pen-pals from any part of the world and I would be very happy if you publish my name in your magazine. I am a young man of 23 years of age and my hobbies are: Bible reading, writing letters, listening to songs, exchanging gifts and reading spiritual books. I reply to letters in English and Amharic.

Mr. Dawit TSEGAW
P.O. Box 181436
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I am a high school student of the 11th grade. I love Jesus and I am serving Good in teaching Sunday school. I like reading (especially the Bible), listening to music (spiritual and instrumental), collecting stamps and visiting historical places. I am also very interested to know about the different cultures of other nations. I also enjoy nature. I would prefer a young man above my age who has more or less the same interests as I do.

Ms. Hallelujah SOLOMON
P.O. Box 120370
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I am a 25-year-old male and a government employee working under the Ministry of Agriculture. I like reading and would like to become fluent in the English language.

Mr. Tamiru DEME
c/o Mendi Post Office
West Wollega Zone
Mene Sibu Wored
Mendi, Ethiopia

I am looking for pen-pals from anywhere in the world, between the ages of 20-50, men or women. I am 27 years old and work as a social worker in my church. My hobbies are: football, table tennis, gardening, traveling and reading spiritual books.

Mr. Kennedy FEYESSA
P.O. Box 21861
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



I am looking for pen-pals from anywhere in the world, men and women of all ages above 20. I am 28 years old and work as a journalist for the government media. My hobbies are: reading, basketball, travelling, and music...

Mr. Neway TSEGAYE
P.O. Box 32772
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I am looking for pen-pals from Sweden, Finland, Canada, Switzerland or any other part of Europe and Asia. I am a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi and I work for the Education Ministry in my country as a primary school teacher. I am interested in Bible study and photography and like writing letters to friends, preaching, visiting friends and sharing with them ideas on spiritual matters. Please write to me in English.

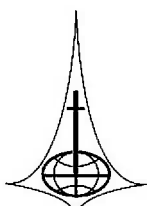
Mr. Hamilton Bishop T.MWAGOMBA
Kakoma F.P. School,
P.O. Box 36, Kaporo
MW-Karonga, Malawi

I am looking forward to a pen friend from Switzerland. I am 21 years old. My hobbies are: reading spiritual books and magazines and writing letters. I reply to letters in English.

Mr. Yaziligne MOLA
Illubabor Zone
Hurumu Post
ET-Hurumu, Ethiopia

I would like to have a pen-pal.

Nkinyani SHUMBA
Magavakava Primary School
P.O. Jeka
Mberengwa, Zimbabwe



"I would like to have a pen friend!"

I am a boy of 19 years of age and I have three brothers and five sisters. My hobbies are watching pictures and playing football and tennis. I am also very interested in traveling, exchanging gifts and reading books, as well as sharing moments of joy and sorrow. I would like to have pen-pals from Geneva, Germany, USA and Sweden.

Bernard KABANGE
C/o Dr. Nkoku-Kabuya
B.P.1826
CD-Kinshasa
Democratic Republic of Congo

I want to have pen-pals from any part of the world. My interests are the following: exchanging cards, reading books especially spiritual ones, collecting stamps, listening to the radio and to music and sharing ideas on political and spiritual issues.

Yonas ESTIFO
P.O. Box 21973-1000
ET Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Leon Mungofa (29) wants to correspond with pals of either sex from all over the world with a long term view to exchange visits, noble ideas and experiences. My interests are public speaking, Safari hunting and freelance research on African oral traditions focusing on the Tonga people of the Zambezi basin. I promise to respond to all letters.

Leon MUNGOFA
20-16th Cress, Warren Park 2,
ZW-Harare
Zimbabwe

I am 30 years old, single, and love music. I want to correspond with Christian and English speaking youth.

Ms. Josoa Yanadimby
Lot 130 PILLE 522
Tsaramandroso Ambony
Mahajanga - 401
MG - Madagascar

I want pen friends from French and English speaking youth from all over the world. I love music.

Ms. Zo Ratsirahona
Lot Vg 51 Amparibe
Antananarivo (101)
Madagascar

I want pen pals from French and English speaking in Africa and Europe.

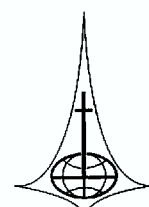
Rakoto Herinirairia ZO
VIMM Malagasy Mohamby
BP.1385
Fianamntsoa (301)
MG - Madagascar

I am student and want English speaking pen friends.

Manampihery Andriamanalina
Lot 04L.56
Abehimena Est.
110 Antsirabe 1
MG - Madagascar



Indonesia
Protestant
Christian Batak
Church Youth
Conference
August 2000-
Happily waiting
for their turn to
get their meal



IMPORTANT INFORMATION PLEASE READ IT NOW!

The LWF Youth magazine is being distributed mainly to participants of Youth in Church and Society (YICAS) activities or leaders of youth ministry in LWF member churches. Copies are also shared with the headquarters of the member churches and related agencies.

As you know we are sending this magazine to you free of charge and we are happy to do so. It has always been important for us at the Youth Desk that as many young people as possible have an opportunity to read our magazine. However, costs for production and mailing are steadily increasing. Now the mailing costs have increased considerably as of July 1, 2000. Therefore, it has again become necessary for us to update our mailing list (last time we did so was in 1996) and eliminate as many "old" addresses as possible.

IF YOU ARE STILL INTERESTED IN RECEIVING YOUTH MAGAZINE OR YOU PREFER THE PRESENT YOUTH LEADERS TO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE, PLEASE RETURN THE FORM BELOW TO US IMMEDIATELY YOU READ THIS (otherwise you might forget!).

WE WILL ONLY SEND THE NEXT YOUTH MAGAZINE TO THOSE WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN YICAS EVENTS FROM 1997 AND THOSE WHO HAVE RETURNED THE FORM.

Send to:
Lutheran World Federation
Youth in Church and Society
P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

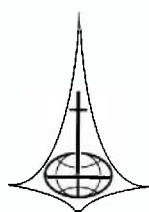
Name: _____

Current/old Address: _____

(Please attach address label if possible, or indicate the label number)

New address if changed: _____

Please write legibly otherwise we will be unable to send Youth magazine. Thank you!



Letters

to the Editor

I am grateful to you for the new issue of the Youth magazine. This issue is really great (the best) particularly the layout and the paper quality. I have noticed some small mistakes but they are not worthy of mentioning. This remark does not neglect the content!

Dragomir Kitanovich, Croatia

May the Lord be with you all in the new millennium. On behalf of the youth, I would like to thank the LWF for what they are doing. This magazine is helping the whole world. Even adults get some points from this magazine. Friends let's join together in praying to God to bless the LWF.

Here in Monkey-Bay Parish, we've organized a week of prayer with a team of youth. We wish we could help, but we have nothing to help with. The best thing we can do, is to pray for the LWF. Apart from this magazine, the LWF is helping other churches through education and other things. The LWF is fulfilling the great command of Jesus which says "go and make disciples in all nations" (Matthews 28:19). May God father, son and the Holy Spirit be with you always in your daily work.

Evangelist Innocent S. Nangwale

Monkey-Bay Parish, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi

First of all, I would like to submit my sincere thanks to the LWF staff for sending me such an enlightening, touching and wonderful Youth magazine. I've been receiving the magazine since I participated in the HIV/AIDS Workshop held in India in 1998. Recently, I received the February 2000 issue. I enjoyed reading every word of it; especially the articles: "Longing for Belonging", "Reconciled Generations" and "Turning Point 2000".

Aradhana Rao, India

I received the February 1999 issue of the Youth magazine last year and, recently, I received the February 2000 issue. The magazine contains many interesting stories with important messages. I would like to say thank you very much to the Federation for the wonderful magazine you have been sending me. Let my God bless your work.

Lidya Soloro, Ethiopia

Thank you very much for always sending your magazines to me. Recently I received the February 2000 edition which, of course, is a special feature - "Youth 2000". The content inside is special and I have seen a lot of improvement both in quality and content. I pray that God will continue to bless all of you at the Youth Desk for giving of your time and effort for this work. Keep it up and more grease to your elbow.

Elisha Eldadd, Nigeria

Thank you !

for your contributions

The bank accounts below can be used for contributions to LWF Youth magazine.

Swiss Francs

Banque Edouard Constant

Cours de Rive 11

Case Postale 3754

CH-1211 Geneva 3, Switzerland

SWIFT: BECWCHGG

CHF account : 620 033 001 011

Dollars

Chase Manhattan Bank

270 Park Avenue, 43rd Floor

New York, N.Y. 10017 USA

USD account : 949-2-417390

Deutsch Marks

Schroeder Münchmeyer Hengst & Co. Bank

Postfach 102042

D-60020 Frankfurt a. M., Germany

BLZ : 502 200 85

DEM account : 00-843 037-00

Swedish Crowns

Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken

S-106-40 Stockholm, Sweden

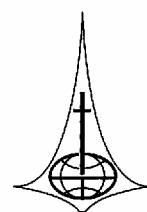
SEK account : 99 5277-10 002 61

When making a payment to one of the above accounts, it is very important to indicate the following :

"To Youth Publications, Account No. 322006"



Opening
Worship at
Protestant
Christian Batak
Church



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE YOUTH DESK:

1. **Spiritual Renewal** - Report on Youth Work in the LWF Member Churches in Africa, September 1999 - in English

This survey reflects to a great extent the opinions and views of the young people in Africa regarding the Spiritual Renewal through worship, music and other cultural expressions.

2. **Report on HIV/AIDS Workshop in Chennai, India** - 13-17 November 1998 - in English

3. **HIV/AIDS brochure**, produced by the HIV/AIDS Workshop in Windhoek, Namibia, May 1993 (jointly organized by the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Youth Team and LWF Youth in Church and Society) - in German, French, Portuguese and Spanish

Information, experiences and thoughts from 27 Young people concerning Aids.

4. **Resource book on HIV/AIDS** (published jointly by the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Youth Team and LWF Youth in Church and Society) in French and Spanish
- Face au SIDA - créons des liens solidaires - en français;
- Hagamos Frente al SIDA - creemos lazos de solidaridad - en castellano

Fruit of the Workshop in Namibia, May 1993. Information, reflections and reality concerning Aids and human sexuality in Youth programs.

To order these publications, please e-mail
sni@lutheranworld.org

or write:

Youth Desk
Department for Mission and Development
LWF
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

